



## Superb Quality Citrus

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conference



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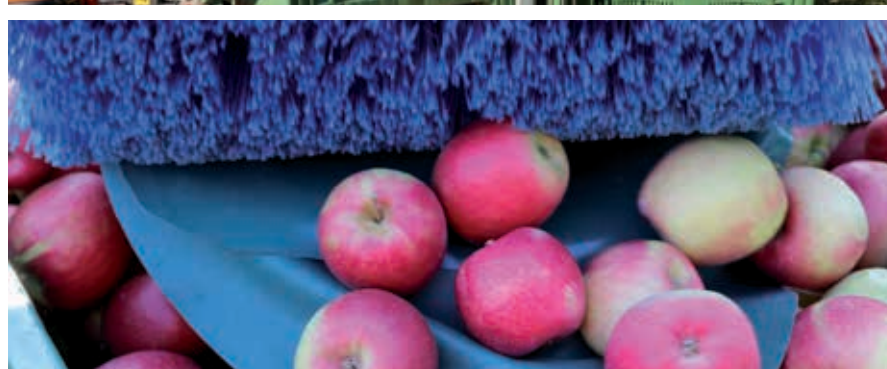
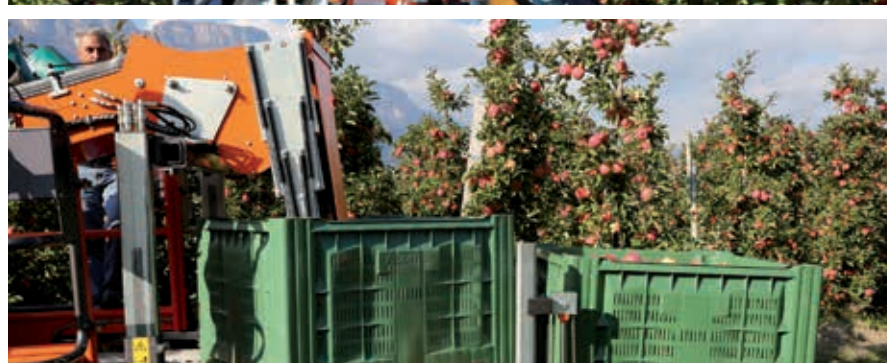
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# What will horticulture be like when our next generation of young leaders have the reins?

*Over the past few months, I have been attending our Young Grower of the Year regional finals.*

By Barry O'Neil  
President : HortNZ



**These are wonderful events and it is great to see good numbers of young horticulturalists entering, along with industry people getting actively involved by attending the competitions to support and celebrate these young people, some of whom will one day be our future leaders.**

And after what has been a difficult year, it's really nice to have something to celebrate!

Since 2007, Horticulture New Zealand has run the annual Young Grower of the Year competition. Young fruit and vegetable growers from around the country compete in regional heats, testing their horticultural skills and knowledge. This year we have seven regional events with the winners of all the regional competitions then competing in the national final.

So later this year we have the final competition in Wellington where all the regional winners enter to determine who will become the New Zealand Young Grower of the Year for 2021. With the generous support of our sponsors, there are many prizes for contestants in both the regional finals and the national final, including \$12,000 for the winner.

We have some amazing young people in our industry. Being part of these competitions gives me great confidence that we will have some very talented future leaders, so let's make sure we look after them, prepare and support them well, and most of all, retain them!

And while there is only one winner from the competitions, every contestant who has put themselves forward has shown they are a winner as they have started their leadership journey, wanting to improve their abilities and skills, to become better growers and better people. So I hope all contestants continue to look for every opportunity in their workplace to continue to learn and develop themselves.

Our future young leaders are likely to be employed by larger businesses, as we see the continued rise of corporate growers. Scale often means the more efficient use of assets and the means to invest in modern growing and packing options. Scale also helps businesses employ permanent staff, so there's less reliance on seasonal demands.

“

**We have some amazing young people in our industry. Being part of these competitions gives me great confidence that we will have some very talented future leaders**

Alternatively, if the business is smaller, it will probably be niche based and producing and delivering to a select set of customers, based on their values.





**THERE ARE MANY PRIZES FOR CONTESTANTS IN BOTH THE YOUNG GROWER OF THE YEAR REGIONAL FINALS AND THE NATIONAL FINAL, INCLUDING \$12,000 FOR THE WINNER**



So with all this in mind, what do I see as some of the leadership skills that our future leaders will need in order to succeed?

Our future leaders will need to be more collaborative, not trying to do everything within one operation but looking at how they can align, partner and build on the opportunities and efficiencies that others can provide to their business. Specialisation is all around us and we as growers won't succeed if we try and do everything, when there are others that are better at doing it. And rather than lose some of our business by collaborating, we can focus on what we do best and as a result, become even more successful.

“

**Our future leaders will need to be more collaborative, not trying to do everything within one operation but looking at how they can align, partner and build on the opportunities and efficiencies that others can provide to their business**

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WE WILL HAVE SOME VERY TALENTED FUTURE LEADERS, SO LET'S MAKE SURE WE LOOK AFTER THEM, PREPARE AND SUPPORT THEM WELL, AND MOST OF ALL, RETAIN THEM

Our future leaders will be managing larger and more complex, often corporate based operations, so the skills they need to succeed must be aligned. They will especially need to be good communicators, confident in speaking to a wide range of people and in leading the larger numbers of staff working in their business. They will lead by influence and example, not by giving instruction, so everyone can move forward together as a team.

Our future leaders will also have to be dynamic, able to move seamlessly between the needs of the crop or orchard and the needs of the office. They will be technology savvy, able to embrace new technology and adjust the business accordingly. But one thing that won't change is the absolute focus on growing the fruit and vegetables that the consumer wants: healthy, nutritious, safe and great-tasting products, produced sustainably.

Lastly, I hope future leaders will have a kind and empathetic style, not as self-centred as some that have proceeded them. I also hope they will have a strong community and social consciousness, and be positive and active in connecting to their community.

“

**I hope future leaders will have a kind and empathetic style**

I can see that our future leaders will be great people to work with. They are the future of our industry, and from what I have seen in the Young Grower of the Year regional competitions, there some amazing future leaders coming soon to a place near you! ●



# Supporting growers and a thriving industry

*As you read this column in early July, it will be a good four weeks since I started in my role as Horticulture New Zealand chief executive.*

By Nadine Tunley  
Chief Executive : HortNZ

**Over that time, I have been on several regional visits meeting passionate and enthusiastic people from across the horticulture sector. I have also met quite a few government Ministers and officials over a similar time period.**

For those of you that do not know, I have been in horticulture before, predominantly in the apple and pear industry as an exporter, director and chair. I have just spent the past four years in the Mānuka Honey industry and have been fortunate to be involved in several other roles across the food and fibre sector. In all of this, I have enjoyed my grower and farmer interactions above all.

In deciding to apply for, and subsequently accepting this role with Horticulture New Zealand, the purpose of the organisation – **Creating an enduring environment where growers thrive** – was a key influence in my decision process. I know from the growers I have met with over the past few weeks that many of you are struggling to see that purpose materialising at the moment.

In addition, now I have met with HortNZ staff and some of the product groups, and read substantial amounts of material around the considerable number of issues facing the entire primary sector at the moment, it is little wonder that many of you are feeling frustrated, and in some cases, uncertain.

I have always been a strong proponent of everyone playing to their strengths, but in the current environment it often feels like the expectation is that you are to be able to play every position on the field. Not only do you need to be the best growers in the world but you need to be chemists, environmentalists, economists, counsellors, health and safety experts, socialists, innovators and entrepreneurs. **Creating an enduring environment where growers thrive** feels anything but.

When I became chair of Pipfruit NZ, we were being referred to as a sunset industry by key politicians. As I take up the role of HortNZ chief executive, we have a government now saying that the horticulture sector will be one of the guiding lights for New Zealand agriculture, as an alternate land use option to assist with economic recovery, post Covid-19 and amidst climate change challenges.

One of my key concerns is to ensure that the horticulture sector is not overburdened with unrealistic expectations. As growers, all of you know and understand that your successes have not been a matter of luck. Rather, they have been the product of a long and often arduous journey, which involved many years of refining your knowledge and expertise – as individuals, as an industry and at times, in cooperation with research institutes. Those investments of both time and money are not just simply replicated.

“

**I will be doing the best I can to provide an environment in which you can thrive**

In summary, it will be my job and that of the HortNZ team to ensure we are here to support you, advocate, and ensure you benefit from the skills and expertise the Hort team has amassed. The next 12 to 24 months may at times feel relentless but I will be doing the best I can to provide an environment in which you can thrive, play to your strengths, and get on with what you set out to be: the best growers of healthy food in the world. ●



# YOUR LEVY AT WORK

INDUSTRY WIDE ISSUES FOR INDUSTRY GOOD

## Natural resources and environment



### Water

#### Hawke's Bay Regional Council Plan Change 9 – Tūtaekurī, Ahuriri Ngaruroro Karamū (TANK) Catchments

In June, the Horticulture New Zealand team presented expert planning, economic, hydrology, water quality and farm planning evidence in front of a panel of independent experts. The HortNZ team was supported by growers from Hawke's Bay Fruit Growers Association and Hawke's Bay Vegetable Growers Association, who provided the panel with examples of how they manage environmental effects, the crops they grow and the involvement they have within local communities.

HortNZ supports provisions that:

- drive efficient use and provide reliability of supply for existing activities,
- promote well designed water harvesting, storage, augmentation and cease take thresholds to improve freshwater outcomes, support economic well-being and increase climate change resilience,
- enable water transfers with highly productive land to drive efficient water use,
- enable crop rotation to support soil health,
- recognise the importance of domestic food supply of fruit and vegetables,
- recognise the value horticulture has in the transition to a low emissions economy,
- recognise tangata whenua values and Māori agribusiness aspirations.

#### Hawke's Bay – Ngaruoro Water Conservation Order

In June, the HortNZ team presented expert planning, economic, hydrology, water quality and ecological evidence in front of an Environment Court Judge and Commissioners.

The Environment Court is considering an appeal to the Ngaruroro Water Conservation Order over the Upper Ngaruroro, granted in 2019.

HortNZ did not appeal the 2019 decision but the decision was appealed by a number of parties. The appeal by White Water Rafting NZ and Forest and Bird sought that a Water Conservation Order also apply to the lower river.

HortNZ joined the appeal in support of Hawke's Bay Regional Council. HortNZ's primary concern is that we do not support a Water Conservation Order being applied to the lower river. In the view of experts that supported the HortNZ case, there are tributaries in the upper river that could be used for water storage without affecting the habitat in the lower river. In addition, that the bird population of the lower river is influenced by matters outside of the control of a Water Conservation Order, such as works in the bed of the river for flood protection and pest management.

#### Horizons Plan Change 2

Horizons Plan Change 2 includes updating outdated Overseer numbers and addressing weaknesses in the drafting of the plan, resulting in no viable consenting pathway for many existing growers and farmers.

Plan Change 2 is an interim plan change, focused on driving the uptake of good management practice. Another plan change would be required to implement the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (NPSFM) 2020.

The Plan Change 2 decision has been appealed. HortNZ will join the appeal and work to defend the decision. More importantly, we will continue to work with growers and with Horizons to implement farm plans while looking ahead to a long-term planning solution that provides for vegetable growing within the region. ●

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# On-farm biosecurity series: farm inputs

*Each horticultural operation needs to source a range of inputs for production – these include water, plant material, hives, growing media, fertiliser, containers and many more.*

By Anna Rathé : Biosecurity Manager, HortNZ



Unfortunately, these inputs have the potential to inadvertently bring unwanted pests, pathogens or weeds with them. Having good biosecurity practices in place for your property will minimise the chance of this happening. Starting with clean inputs that are free from pest, disease and weed contamination provides a great foundation for the rest of your production processes.

It can be useful to think about your property boundaries as you would a fortress. Be sure to consider the biosecurity risk associated with any farm inputs **before** they come across your boundary, and make sure you take steps to minimise any biosecurity risk to your property and your assets.

Farm inputs should be included in your on-farm biosecurity plan. Contact your industry body to see if they have a crop specific template that you can use. If not, you can use the Horticulture New Zealand template that is available online. Some of the common farm input risk areas are explored below, along with risk reduction actions for you to consider.

## Plant material

Seeds, seedlings, budwood or canes for planting can be a risk to your property if they are not clean. Source material from high rated health schemes or certified suppliers if available. Talk to your supplier about biosecurity, hygiene, testing or screening for pests and diseases, and record keeping. Obtain copies of tests, certificates and declarations when available. Inspect plant material on arrival for signs of pests or disease, and isolate new plants away from your production areas for an appropriate period, to check for symptoms of disease before planting. Record from where plant material was sourced so you can trace it back if needed.

## Hives

Bees and bumblebees are important pollinators for crops, but may spread pathogens as they move from plant to plant. Good biosecurity practices include sourcing hives from a reputable supplier, finding out where the hives have been prior to your property, and if you keep your own hives, regularly checking their health.

## Growing media and fertiliser

Pests, pathogens and weeds can be brought onto your property through contaminated production inputs such as improperly prepared growing media or fertiliser. When making orders, check your supplier has processes in place to ensure growing media and fertiliser are free from viable pests, pathogens or weed seeds. Inspect inputs on arrival and ensure they are free from contamination. Keep records for growing media and fertiliser, including where they were sourced from and where and when they are used or stored on your property.

“

**It can be useful to think about your property boundaries as you would a fortress**

## Containers

Used, dirty or poorly stored containers can present a biosecurity risk. Be sure to check containers on arrival and ensure they are clean and free from contamination, soil and plant debris. Disinfect all reusable packaging and containers that arrive back on your property. Keep records of the source of containers.

## In conclusion

The above is not an exhaustive list. You should think about any additional inputs that you bring onto your property and how to minimise any potential biosecurity risk that they may pose.

Remember, if you see anything unusual associated with your farm inputs, particularly anything imported, do the right thing and report any suspect exotic pests or diseases via the MPI pest and disease hotline on 0800 80 99 66. ●

*Disclaimer: While every effort has been made to ensure the information in this publication is accurate, Horticulture New Zealand does not accept any responsibility or liability for error of fact, omission, interpretation or opinion that may be present, nor for the consequences of any decisions or actions based on this information.*



Lance Burdett



Jimi Hunt

# Horticulture Conference 2021: register now

*It's now less than a month to the Horticulture Conference 2021: Resilience and Recovery, being held on 5–6 August 2021 at Mystery Creek.*

**The programme has been put together with the entire industry in mind: from growers, packhouse operators, and logistics companies, to wholesalers and retailers, and researchers.**

Major themes include labour, climate change, freshwater, biosecurity and compliance, as well as the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on labour, freight and costs.

Given all that has happened and continues to evolve in horticulture, there is also a focus on well-being and ensuring the health and resilience of all the people that take part in the industry.

Here is a list of some of the highlights:

- Making Integrated Pest Management (IPM) work
- Nitrogen management for sustainable vegetable production
- Supermarkets, including the Commerce Commission's investigation

- How diversity can boost resilience and recovery
- How to improve mental fitness
- Labour and workforce development
- Freshwater
- What really goes on in Parliament
- Unpacking regenerative agriculture.

We are confident that the diverse range of topics and speakers from New Zealand and overseas will stimulate discussion, offer insight as well as practical advice. In keeping with the current environment, the length of the conference has been reduced to two days to offer you value for money as well as for your investment in time. ●



Go to <https://conferences.co.nz/hortnz2021/> to view the full programme and sign up for the conference.



## BUILDING RESILIENCE

**Two speakers at the Horticulture Conference in early August will give growers their very personal insights into building resilience, a conference theme.**

The first, Lance Burdett, was a police negotiator for many years, running high risk operations such as the Napier siege in May 2009, and becoming the national adviser for the police crisis negotiation teams. But he found himself having to deal with personal issues much closer to home with his niece's suicide and his own depression caused by burnout.

So, he formed his own company, WARN International, a consultancy and coaching business which specialises in enhanced communication techniques and personal resilience support to reduce workplace stress. He gives presentations and holds workshops dealing with how to overcome the pressure and stress of the modern world, specialising in advanced communication techniques, psychologically-based safety practices and personal resilience tips for everyday use to keep safe and well.

In this role he's spent the last six years working with those in horticulture and farming, showing how challenges can be met through the use of simple and effective tools. His presentations show how to get to sleep within a few breaths, how to stop waking in the early morning, how to better manage worry as well as how to remain alert through the whole day. In a humorous way he describes how our brains tend to only see negative things and then exaggerate them so we have a feeling of being overwhelmed. Then he's able to introduce a solution enabling people to retrain their brains.

Jimi Hunt, who is also speaking at the conference, sees his job as reducing pain. "The world's mental health is, unfortunately, getting exponentially worse," he says.

"The only way we can combat that is with constant conscious choices and creating an environment that makes those choices possible." His presentations and workshops help increase overall mental health, improve relationships between staff and customers as well as staff efficiency and effectiveness.

Jimi specialises in mental fitness which he says is different to resilience. While resilience is likened to being tough by getting back up after being knocked down, with mental fitness he says it's possible to learn to see the punches coming before they land.

His presentation will centre on some crucial, practical steps to take to gain mental fitness, demonstrating the necessity and benefits of being proactive about looking after mental fitness and health, along with the many benefits that come from that.

He does warn that as with physical fitness, it won't happen overnight, but he can provide some tips and strategies in order to increase mental fitness over time, so the full impact of those inevitable punches in life can be avoided. ●



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# Campaign attracts school leavers to food production industries

*More than 150 high school leavers now have a better understanding of careers in New Zealand's food production industries, thanks to the Feed Your Future campaign.*

By Hugh Chesterman : HortNZ

**"We're really stoked with how the Feed Your Future series has gone. We had seven events from Whangarei to Invercargill, where we took high school students to visit successful and innovative primary sector businesses," says GoHort manager, Emma Boase, who is in charge of the national network of Career Progression Managers working to attract people to the horticulture industry.**

Feed Your Future is a collaborative career promotion series involving GoHort, GoDairy, Lincoln University and Massey University to encourage high school students to pursue careers in the food production industries.

"We had more than 40 young professionals share at the events how they got to where they are in the industry," says Emma.

"Having role models to look up to, and being able to see the different pathways to where you can be in five years, is hugely important to school leavers. For those who don't have a background in primary industries, these events have been really eye-opening to the opportunities available.

"We made sure to include students who hadn't had experience or exposure to the primary industries, but were open to a career in the sector. We introduced them to people who had 'been there and done that', and could give them a taste of what it would be like working or studying in the primary industries."

Adam Shears, a Year 13 student at Mount Hutt College, found the event gave him insights into the opportunities in the industry that he otherwise wouldn't have had.



*The young professionals panel, led by Sarah de Bruin from AgFirst, share their stories about getting into the food industry with Nelson high schoolers*

"It was a very cool event. I loved being able to speak with people who are in the sector and get a perspective of their lives through university and all the opportunities they took to become who and where they are today," said Adam.

Sarah de Bruin, a Horticultural Consultant at AgFirst who spoke at the Motueka event, wished that this type of event was available when she was at school.

“

**It was very interesting listening to stories and advice from such a diverse set of experiences**

"If this sort of thing had been offered to me at high school, I would have been all over it," said Sarah.

"My personal highlight was the young professional panel. It was very interesting listening to stories and advice from such a diverse set of experiences.

"Overall, the students reacted well to the presentations. I think it opened their minds more to the many roles involved in primary industry supply chains and the different pathways everyone took to get where they are. A few of the students actually changed their minds about what they thought their pathway was, after hearing the different stories." ●



# 2021 HortNZ AGM.

## (Notices of Motion)

### MOTION 1

**That the minutes of the 15th AGM of Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ), held on 25 September 2020 via Zoom be taken as read and confirmed as a true and correct record of that meeting.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

A PDF of the Minutes of the 2020 AGM is available at [www.hortnz.co.nz](http://www.hortnz.co.nz). If you have any questions or would like hard copies, please email [board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz)

### MOTION 2

**That the President's and CEO's Reports for the financial year ending 31 March 2021, as published in the Annual Report, be taken as read and adopted.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

A PDF of the Annual Report will be available at [www.hortnz.co.nz](http://www.hortnz.co.nz). If you have any questions or would like hard copies, please email [board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz)

### MOTION 3

**That the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 be adopted.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

A PDF of the Annual Report and Financial Statements will be available at [www.hortnz.co.nz](http://www.hortnz.co.nz). If you have any questions or would like hard copies, please email [board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz)

### MOTION 4

**That the 2022-year levy rate for the purposes of the Commodity Levies (Vegetables and Fruit) Order 2019 remains the same and be set for domestic sales at 0.14% of the price received at the first point of sale, for export sales remain and be set at 0.14% of the price received after the deduction of all offshore costs and for processed sales remain and be set at 0.14% of the notional process value.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Commodity Levies (Vegetables and Fruit) Order 2019 allows a maximum rate to be set for vegetables and fruit at 0.15% for domestic sales and processed sales taken at the first point of sale and at 0.15% for export sales at the first point of sale after all offshore costs (including international freight) have been deducted. For processed vegetables and fruit the levy is deducted from the notional process value, which is defined in the Order. At the AGM levy paying growers may set any rate up to the maximum for the next calendar year. The current rate for vegetables and fruit is 0.14%. This levy funds the activities of HortNZ. The Board recommends that the levy rate be set and remain at 0.14% for the 2022 year to meet the commitments identified in HortNZ's Budget.

**There is no change to the directors' remuneration for the 2021/2022 year.**

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Independent Directors Remuneration Committee (the Committee) has met and conducted a review of the Directors remuneration. The Committee has recognised and considered factors currently impacting the Horticulture sector and recommends no change to the Director's remuneration for the 2021/2022 year. The Board supported this position, therefore there is no motion.

### MOTION 5

**That the Budget for the year ended 31 March 2022 be endorsed.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

A copy of the Budget for the year ended 31 March 2022 is available at [www.hortnz.co.nz](http://www.hortnz.co.nz). If you have any questions or would like hard copies, please email [board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:board.secretary@hortnz.co.nz)

### MOTION 6

**That BDO, Wellington, be appointed auditors for the year ended 31 March 2022.**

Proposed by the HortNZ Board

# Farm plans and meeting new requirements

*The final countdown is on for the government's release of the draft national freshwater farm plan (FW-FP) regulations.*

By Ailsa Robertson : HortNZ Sustainability and Extension Manager

**A FW-FP is also known as a Farm Environment Plan. In late June, the curtain draws on this anticipated piece of regulation that impacts horticultural land use five hectares and above.**

This means a farm (as defined) must have a certified FW-FP if five or more hectares is horticultural land use, and the FW-FP applies to the entire farm. The details of what needs to be in a FW-FP, and when and where it needs to be completed, will be covered in the new draft regulations that will be consulted on around mid-2021, subject to Ministers' decisions.

These new national FW-FP regulations will give effect to the Resource Management Amendment Act 2020, Part 9A Freshwater Farm Plans<sup>1</sup>. As stated in the legislation, "the purpose of this Part [9A] is to better control the adverse effects of farming on freshwater and freshwater ecosystems within specified districts, regions, or parts of New Zealand through the use of certified freshwater farm plans."

“

**...the purpose of this Part [9A] is to better control the adverse effects of farming on freshwater and freshwater ecosystems within specified districts, regions, or parts of New Zealand**

Horticulture New Zealand advocates for the use of industry assurance programmes, like GLOBALG.A.P. and NZGAP, to deliver audited and certified FW-FPs. GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) environmental modules, such as NZGAP's Environment Management System (EMS) add-on, help growers build comprehensive and robust Farm Environment Plans that identify environmental risks from their growing operations and implement good management practices to appropriately manage those risks over time.

## What is HortNZ doing?

HortNZ will be leading a submission in response to the new regulations, in consultation with growers and affiliated industry groups. The government's consultation period will be short, so please watch the HortNZ newsletter for updates.

HortNZ is working with Product Groups and District Associations to offer regional Farm Environment Plan (FEP) workshops to step GAP certified growers through the process of developing an audited and certified FEP.

“

**HortNZ will be leading a submission in response to the new regulations, in consultation with growers and affiliated industry groups**

## What can growers do?

You can develop your own FEP, or you can seek support from your local adviser(s). Local grower collectives like District Associations can build important momentum around Farm Environment Plans, and HortNZ will support grower collectives who wish to develop farm plans and apply for funding to aid grower FEP development and implementation.

Contact HortNZ or your Product Group now to learn how you can start your FEP. ●

<sup>1</sup>New Zealand Legislation. Resource Management Amendment Act 2020. Part 9A Freshwater Farm Plans. [https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0030/latest/LMS362301.html?search=sw\\_096be8ed819b9f2a\\_part+9a\\_25\\_se&p=1&sr=12](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0030/latest/LMS362301.html?search=sw_096be8ed819b9f2a_part+9a_25_se&p=1&sr=12)



A man and a woman are standing in a vineyard, looking at a bunch of grapes hanging from a vine. The man is on the left, wearing a black polo shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt under a dark vest. They are both looking at the grapes with interest. The background is filled with green grapevines and leaves.

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# YOUR INDUSTRY

ACROSS THE SECTOR — ACROSS THE COUNTRY

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*Socially  
responsible fruit*

*Page 33*







Cool mornings and long sunshine hours delivered good colour for Gisborne satsuma mandarins

COVER  
STORY

# Good volumes and high colour bode well for citrus season

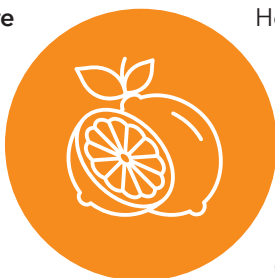
*Issues with getting fruit to onshore consumers before imported competition arrives, of dealing with delays in shipping to offshore customers, and of course, the industry bugbear of obtaining labour are the major challenges facing citrus growers this year.*

By Kristine Walsh

**"But these are not unique to citrus, it's what we're seeing right across the horticultural industry," says Citrus New Zealand chair, labour and fruit quality portfolio holder, Wayne Hall.**

"The good news is that they are issues that can mostly be overcome if growers are organised and are planning well ahead."

Good fruit coming off the trees helps too, and Wayne, who is based in Gisborne, says the latest season has seen good quality, great taste and higher volumes across the citrus varieties.



However, competition with imported fruit was felt keenly by Encore mandarin growers who, after starting their harvest in October, found it hard to get decent returns with volumes of good quality, low-seeded fruit arriving from Australia.

"So really it comes back to planning. If growers can work closely with their marketers timing-wise they are going to get a better result, particularly after Christmas when those imported volumes may drop off."



Contract picker Sione Kaliopasi (right) got off to an early start picking satsuma mandarins for Gisborne orchard owner Pete Burgess (left)

And perhaps as a result of the consumer preference for low-seed varieties, Wayne has seen some reduction in Encore plantings.

"It's not dramatic at this stage but because land use is changing, with new owners interested in high-value crops like apples and kiwifruit, it's something we might see a bit more of."

“

**Across the industry there has been an issue with containers being booked but not arriving on time, which is a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and is likely to continue for some time**

The issue of imported competition across all citrus varieties is one Wayne and Citrus New Zealand domestic portfolio holder James Williams are keeping a close eye on.

"Every March we meet with the two major supermarket chains to discuss the previous season's highs and lows, and look at what is coming up in the new season," Wayne says.

"We've been doing that for the past five years and it's a really useful way of keeping the lines of communication open and developing a good relationship with those major buyers, who have become increasingly more receptive to the issues within our product group.

"Though there are challenges, both chains are really supportive of the industry and their focus is on supporting New Zealand product, unless of course, there are issues with the quality or volume of a particular variety."

Elsewhere in the mandarin market, the satsuma harvest got underway in Northland in early April a couple of weeks earlier than usual, so growers were able to get in early supplies of great tasting, high-colour fruit.

"Then the Gisborne growers came on a couple of weeks later so we've seen a good flow of excellent quality fruit, meaning growers have been rewarded with good returns," Wayne says.

"Then as the satsuma harvest eases back towards the end of July, we gear up for navel oranges to start in July, with Meyer lemons likely to be off the trees by September and the Yen Ben harvest continuing through the summer months."

The lemons, in particular, were on track for higher volumes but with around 50% of them destined for export, that presented a problem for shipping, Wayne says.

"Across the industry there has been an issue with containers being booked but not arriving on time, which is a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and is likely to continue for some time.

"That means fruit is sometimes having to be held in coolstores onshore for longer than we would like to see.





Cool mornings and long sunshine hours brought the colour to the fruit that meant contract picker Taufa Kaliopasi could get off to an early start



The latest season has seen good quality, great taste and higher volumes across all varieties, says Citrus New Zealand chair, labour and fruit quality portfolio holder, Wayne Hall

"Combined with increased shipping costs and a high New Zealand dollar, that does present challenges. But on the upside, overseas markets are short of fruit which could result in strong returns for our growers, depending on quality."

As for those thorny labour issues, Wayne says the fall-out from last year's Covid-19 lockdown and the ongoing pandemic continues to be felt right across the industry.

"Just as one harvest begins there is work like pruning to do in other product groups so it is difficult to get enough people to pick citrus crops, and that's not going to end any time soon.

"So the labour market is tight, but again, growers who are well organised and planning well ahead should be able to get the workers they need."

“

**So the labour market is tight, but again, growers who are well organised and planning well ahead should be able to get the workers they need**

Meanwhile though, he is kept busy with his roles for Citrus New Zealand, and as horticultural general manager for Gisborne's innovative Wi Pere Trust, Wayne Hall manages to also grow mandarins and navel oranges on his own Manutuke property and says he is sorted for this year's satsuma harvest.

"It's up to my wife (Kerran) and I to do that on weekends," he says. "We're very cheap labour!" ●

## CITRUS: THE FIGURES

According to the latest figures from Citrus New Zealand - for 2019 - 320 New Zealand growers with more than one million trees on 1,660 hectares of land produce around 30,000 tonnes of citrus each year, mainly in Gisborne and Northland, with Gisborne representing 56% percent of the harvest. Together, they produced \$58.5 million in domestic sales and \$12 million in exports.

Taking into consideration that many growers produce more than one variety, in 2019 mandarins was the biggest variety group, with 198 growers producing 10,920 tonnes from 513,870 trees on 783 hectares (\$25m domestic, \$0.4m export), followed by:



### Oranges

183 growers producing 10,100 tonnes from 320,840 trees on 783 hectares (\$18m domestic, \$1.7m export).



### Lemons

180 growers producing 7,000 tonnes from 153,730 trees on 260 hectares (\$12m domestic, \$9.8m export).



### Limes

50 growers producing 712 tonnes from 8,960 trees on 27 hectares (\$2m domestic).



### Tangelos

28 growers producing 640 tonnes from 11,105 trees on 22 hectares (\$1m domestic, \$0.1m export).



### Grapefruit

18 growers producing 370 tonnes from 4,247 trees on 15 hectares (\$0.3m domestic). ●

# TUPU – a Far North workforce initiative

*The horticultural industry needs more sustainable labour options, Far North horticulture is in a growth phase, and local whānau need employment.*

By Wendy Laurenson

**So three iwi of Te Hiku o te Ika (the Far North) – Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri, Ngāi Takoto – and their partners, have initiated a Group Employment Programme, Tupu, to pull these strands together.**

“Increasing iwi investment in horticulture production, and Covid-19 served to highlight the need for this programme, designed specifically for Te Hiku, which launched in April this year,” explains Bridget Dawson, project lead, Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust. “These times are providing a rare window for a change in mind-set for all partners, and Tupu is an iwi led, industry based, community driven initiative. The casual nature of horticultural work hasn’t provided meaningful or sustainable employment for local whānau. Since Covid, employers can no longer access a consistent non-local workforce supply so this has provided an opportunity to meet local iwi, employee and employer needs.”

“

**Te Hiku whānau need opportunities to upskill and find sustainable employment to achieve long-term prosperity here**

Tupu (which translates as seedling or growth) was a year in the planning, longer in incubation and includes a broad range of key relationships. Bridget says, “The horticulture industry needs a reliable skilled seasonal workforce in the short-term, and a pipeline of suitable full-time employees longer-term. Te Hiku whānau need opportunities to upskill and find sustainable employment to achieve long-term prosperity here. The government wants a pathway for job seekers to find meaningful employment. And our community needs training that is learner, industry and Te Ao Māori led. We’ve woven these needs together and offer an opportunity to transform current inefficiencies in

the horticulture sector, while at the same time providing security and financial independence for employees.”

“

**...the focus on cultural well-being, pastoral care, and an individual career and learning plan makes Tupu different from other work training programmes**

Integrating all these aspects, Tupu partners include Te Rūnanga o Te Rarawa (as Group Employer), Te Rūnanga Nui o Te Aupōuri, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Takoto, industry employers (Bells Produce and Mapua Avocados), NZ Sports Turf Institute as training provider, Ministry of Social Development, Tertiary Education Committee, Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment, and Te Hiku Iwi Development Trust. “All partners meet fortnightly and have a commitment to the programme for an initial two-year period, with 20 participants per year,” Bridget says.

Tupu now has 20 kaimahi (workers) hired on a one-year full-time contract to work 80% of the time with host employers, and 20% of their time in industry specific training. Bridget explains, “The aim is for them to gain necessary skills and experience to transition into permanent roles in the horticulture industry, including in management and self-employment in the future. The programme is available to whānau on the MSD Jobseeker list living in Te Hiku, provided that they are interested in horticulture, are fit enough to do the work, and that their social needs can be met to fully participate in the programme.”

Bridget points out that the focus on cultural well-being, pastoral care, and an individual career and learning plan makes Tupu different from other work training programmes.

"We've designed this from an economic, social and cultural perspective specific to Te Hiku. It is a holistic programme where we find out what interests, qualifications, ambitions and challenges the students bring with them, then we provide wrap around support and flexible training so they can succeed in learning and career pathways. We have navigators who walk alongside the kaimahi out in the field to help them understand what's required or to be an ear for anything that may be impacting their ability to participate. The kaimahi have already been picking and sorting mandarins on Te Rarawa owned Bells Produce near Kaitaia and are due to start soon at Mapua Avocados' orchards."

Naomi Austen Reid, Tupu operations manager based in the Kaitaia training premises, says that the Tupu programme has also built in flexibility to suit the industry. "We're able to wrap our training content around the local industry's seasonal calendar and meet growers' specific project needs rather than be limited to core curriculum activities. The mandarin crop at Te Rarawa Bells Produce, for example, was ready to pick earlier than expected so we were able to shuffle things to have our crew trained and available. It pulled up some increased challenges that we can learn from, but we've built monitoring and evaluation

systems into the Tupu model to ensure we remain in this long-term."

Naomi adds, "This is a challenging and exciting programme and already we have some rewarding outcomes. One of our kaimahi wanted a career in horticulture but had been laid off from a horticulture job because he was colour blind. After some research, we found him glasses that overcome colour blindness, so he is now able to follow his dream in horticulture. Another young guy who is mechanically minded could be a candidate for an apprenticeship so we're finding out what can be done within Tupu to set him up for that in local horticulture."



GoHort's Northland Careers Progression Manager, Maria Fathollahi, has been watching Tupu evolve. "Te Hiku is really taking ownership of this integrated initiative and they're the main contractor and employer so they're backing themselves and building local capability. They're also getting fantastic minds involved. Our role has simply been to facilitate planning and help put partners in place. If the Tupu programme is successful, it has the potential to be applied to other iwi, regions and primary industries and could become a foundational model for horticulture's future." ●

## CRAIGMORE



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See [www.craigmore.com](http://www.craigmore.com) for an in-depth look at our businesses.

Craigmore's purpose is to build and operate high-performing forestry, farming and horticultural businesses that are leaders in sustainability and that revitalise under-invested rural communities (such as Northland, Gisborne, Central Hawkes Bay). Most importantly, we are committed to helping our people and partners to grow and thrive while working with us. We have access to significant capital to fund our growth and are seeking people with a desire to join us on the journey to build sustainable operations we can all be proud of.

Our apple business is in its infancy, currently with orchards in Hawkes Bay and Gisborne. As our learning develops, we are embracing new technology, precision farming and solid stakeholder partnerships on our journey to create and operate the most sustainable and profitable orchards possible. We have almost completed Craigmore's first stage of apple development – which is to create 170 ha of high-density orchards with modern varieties (on top of 100 ha that is leased to another party).

As the development stage of our existing apple orchards in Hawkes Bay nears completion, we are now searching for an outstanding hands-on apple leader to run our apple operations, and to prepare for the next round of growth.

Based in Central Hawkes Bay and travelling as required, you will lead the Orchard and Development Managers, plus work closely with all stakeholders, assessing and developing best practice and innovative protocols to lead us into the future. You will have full accountability for apple operations, supported by our strong financial and advisory resources.

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Key competencies required to be successful include:

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- Extensive experience in an apple growing environment – with the ability to evaluate & identify the best growing practices
- Strong commercial acumen – the strength to make sound, well-reasoned decisions that continuously improve business operations

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**To speak in strict confidence about this role or to request an Information Document, please phone Deb Francis from AgRecruit on 021 224 5000.** Otherwise, send your CV with covering letter to [apply@agrecruit.co.nz](mailto:apply@agrecruit.co.nz) by Monday 19 July.





# Becoming cyber smart

*Imagine a full packhouse in the middle of the season and the system has locked you out.*

By Anne Hardie

**Or a crop you can't irrigate because you no longer control it. Someone, probably on the far side of the world, has found a weak spot in your system and taken over. It can be as simple as clicking on a suspicious email and before you know it, a hacker has access to your business computer system and can shut you out for a ransom.**

FMG manager advice services Stephen Cantwell says the better technology gets, the more dependent we become on it and the greater the impact when hackers attack. That was highlighted by the recent ransomware attacks on the Waikato District Health Board and Australia's largest meatworks, JBS, with the latter paying out more than \$14 million to its attacker. It has happened in the dairy industry where a farmer was unable to milk the cows after hackers shut them out of their own system.

It happens, and Cantwell says there are probably more successful cyber attacks than just the reported cases because those who get hacked or scammed are often too embarrassed to admit it. They shouldn't be, he says, because it can happen to anyone, especially as hackers become increasingly sophisticated.

Nearly 8,000 cyber security incidents were reported in New Zealand during 2020 – up 65% on the previous year – and \$16.9 million was lost to attackers. Since 2017, losses totalling \$56 million have been reported to the government's cyber security agency, CERT NZ.

"It's so easy when you get so many emails to click on something before even realising what it is," Cantwell says.

Many rural businesses have computer systems that are for personal use as well, and he says that increases the number of emails and the type of emails for hackers to target.

Phishing emails and credential harvesting (which is obtaining username and password combinations) made up 46% of the cyber security incidents reported to CERT NZ for the first quarter of this year. Emails usually encourage you to take action such as clicking on a link or opening an attachment, leading to a virus or a hacker potentially taking control, stealing your data or holding you to ransom.

Cantwell says it is essential for businesses to have backups of their data and ensure those backups work by checking



FMG manager advice services Stephen Cantwell

them regularly. There have been cases when people thought they had backups, but when they needed them, they weren't working.

Paying a ransom is not a wise option, says CERT NZ incident response manager Nadia Yousef. There's a high chance you still won't get the data back after paying the ransom and the system may get reinfected.

Hackers are constantly scanning the internet for vulnerable systems and computers and grab any opportunity, she says. For that reason, it's vital to keep software and devices up to date. It may be annoying every time an update pops up on the computer requesting a response, but it is the most important thing you can do to protect your system from cyber attacks. Those updates are designed to fix problems and she says it's important to click yes.

Ensuring you have backups to your information via say, a portable USB device or in the cloud, is the next essential factor to avoid the repercussions from an attack. Yousef says financial data, critical documents – everything you need to keep the business running if you get ransomware in your system, should be backed up.

"If you don't have those backups, the choices you are left with is you have to start again or pay the ransom, which we don't advise."

When it comes to passwords, they need to be unique and strong enough to deter hackers getting into your computer system or phone. Yousef says most of the incidents reported to CERT NZ could have been avoided with better passwords. People often use the same password across multiple accounts and she says that makes them vulnerable to cyber security attacks. An attacker only needs

that one password to access all their private and financial information. It's paramount to use different passwords for different sites and she suggests using a passphrase with three or four random words, plus added numbers and special characters. Rather than worrying about remembering several passwords, she advises password managers (which is software that keeps all your passwords). It's basically like a digital safe. The software for password management is built using strong encryption methods and security practices, then regularly reviewed by independent security researchers. It goes without saying that you then need a really good, strong password for the password manager. The password manager can be stored on your local drive or computer, in the cloud, or with your browser.

"Make you and your organisation as less of a target as possible," she advises. "They want to go for the easiest.

"The more we live online, the more cyber security is going to be an issue."

An expensive issue. In the first quarter of 2021, six of the 339 incidents that CERT NZ responded to involved more than \$100,000. Two of those were about unauthorised access, two were about invoice scams, one was about website compromise and one was about an investment scam.

Invoice scams are getting increasingly sophisticated and Cantwell says rural businesses often have invoices with large sums and they deal with a number of different suppliers. Invoices may look legitimate, but the account number has been changed. Once the account has been paid, the hacker moves it on quickly which makes traceability difficult.

"Have processes in place. If you get an invoice from someone you pay regularly and you notice the account number is different, it pays to pick up the phone and check. The first time you are paying any large account, check the account number over the phone."

The same applies to requests from banks or New Zealand Post or similar – get on the phone and check it out if in doubt, he says.

The world is a very small place when it comes to criminal cyber activity, with attackers only an email away. In both horticulture and agriculture, businesses are increasingly dependent on technology and when it is taken out of the equation by an attacker, potentially on the far side of the globe, Cantwell says life becomes very difficult. ●



Find out more about these tips at <https://www.cert.govt.nz/business/guides/top-11-cyber-security-tips-for-your-business/>.

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# Apprenticeships grow careers and businesses

*Apprenticeships grow careers and businesses – and there has never been a better time to start an apprenticeship than now.*

Supplied

That is because the government is covering the portion of fees that can be attributed to training that occurs between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2022. This is known as **Free Trades Training**.

Further, government is providing direct funding to employers to help cover the additional costs associated with training an apprentice on the job. This equates to \$1,000 a month for the first year, and \$500 a month for second year apprentices up until August 2022. This is called the **Apprenticeship Boost** and is available by application to the Ministry of Social Development.

The good news is that our industry has several apprenticeships to choose from. From pipfruit and kiwifruit to citrus and avocados in our **Fruit Production**



apprenticeship. Tomatoes to cucumbers to lettuce and asparagus in our **Indoor Crop Production** apprenticeship. Broccoli, to yams and zucchini in our **Outdoor Crop Production** apprenticeship. Or packer, grader, dispatcher, coolstore operations supervisor in our **Postharvest** apprenticeship. Our apprenticeship programmes will provide the standards for the skills and expertise requirements to be trade qualified in the horticulture sector, and for our industry people to be valued and rewarded wherever they choose to be.

## What is an Apprenticeship?

The term apprenticeship means that the learning meets a range of requirements set by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and the Tertiary Education



Commission. For example, our apprenticeships contain competency standards requiring that a learner must be able perform the task to obtain the standard. Unlike other forms of assessment where learners may just have to understand 50% of the topic in order to get a pass, with the apprenticeship the learner must be able to show they are competent. Apprenticeships should not be confused with 'cadetships' which could be literally anything as determined by the creator.

“

**Our apprenticeship programmes will provide the standards for the skills and expertise requirements to be trade qualified**

There are three parties in an apprenticeship: the apprentice, the employer and the Primary ITO training adviser. Each has unique responsibilities. For the apprentice, these are to work and learn. For the employer, these are to train and support the apprentice. For Primary ITO training advisers, it's about facilitating the training and supporting both the apprentice and the employer throughout the apprenticeship. We have over 1,000 learners in the horticulture production sectors.

### New vehicle micro-credentials

Additional financial support from government has not been limited to apprenticeships. All of our programmes that have been created by employers for employers have either no fees or reduced fees. The latest new programmes to benefit from this funding are micro-credentials in vehicle training for tractors, light utility vehicles (LUVs), motorcycles and quad bikes. Micro-credentials are bite-sized pieces of learning that have been created by Primary ITO so that specific, specialised skills can be acquired.

Employers will have a short window to able to obtain these micro-credentials for their employees with no course fee. The cost in most cases is a day off-job for the employee and another part day for assessment – a relatively low cost for peace of mind.

### National Horticulture Field Days

Machinery displays are often a drawcard on show at Field Days – as demonstrated at the recent show at Tomoana Horticultural Field Day in June. A good selection was on display including the Hydralada, popular with pruners, pickers and orchard workers. The Hydralada and tractor competitions made for good viewing.

It was great to see an increased focus on careers and workforce, and a huge programme tailored for schools to interact with exhibitors on the first day. Our staff enjoyed engaging with the young people who are keen on careers in the primary industries, and the opportunity to connect with employers and industry stakeholders. It was also good to see the focus on innovation and technology. ●



Adam Fleck on the Hydralada at National Horticulture Field Days

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In 2017 Genevieve Whitson was the Scottish Road Series Champion

## Elite cyclist joins NZ Avocado's corporate team

*Genevieve Whitson's rural roots and university education are among the factors which enabled her to be an elite athlete, competing internationally, while also having a career in the rural sector.*

By Elaine Fisher

**Now corporate services associate with NZ Avocado, Genevieve has competed professionally in cycling for 15 years, achieving three Scottish National Road Cycling titles, and in 2018 her name was added to the Scottish Cycling Roll of Honour.**

For a couple of years Genevieve did ride professionally based in France and Upstate New York in the United States, but when she worked for seven years at Scotland's Rural University College (SRUC), Genevieve continued to ride at the elite level, thanks to her employer's support. "The college had a great attitude to work/life balance, and I was able to take quite long periods of time out for cycling - up

to four months," says Genevieve who is also a member of Women in Horticulture.

"I had some great career progression at SRUC starting off as an executive assistant and moving into an international engagement alumni role, networking with other agricultural colleges around the globe and supporting marketing campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of choosing an agricultural career path and staying connected as an alumni.

"I am glad I had completed my bachelor of arts degree from Otago University before taking up my racing career. The majority of women riding professionally don't receive

huge pay-packets, although that is improving with the introduction of a minimum wage in 2020, but a lot still work part-time. "However, some women I competed against who had come through national federation riding academies, had not been encouraged to also do studies in order to have a career after cycling."

Because of her family's heritage, Genevieve had always wanted to visit Scotland. "I had a desire to connect with family roots in Scotland. Even though the Scottish weather is pretty terrible, the landscape reminded me of rural Manawatu where I grew up, and when I got to Scotland I fell in love with it. It felt like home. Now I have two homes, one is New Zealand, the other is Scotland."

Scotland also offered Genevieve opportunities in cycling which were not available in New Zealand. She has competed in mountain biking, road cycling and Cyclo-cross and has ridden for New Zealand at four world championships. "In 15 years of competing, the worst accident I had resulted in a broken finger."

**"I had some great career progression at SRUC starting off as an executive assistant and moving into an international engagement alumni role"**

In 2017-2018 Genevieve was under consideration for inclusion in the Scottish team for the Commonwealth Games. "When I was not selected and that final frontier had not worked out, together with the realisation that I was getting older, I lost the love for competing at that level."

Today she enjoys cycling for pleasure and is coaching a talented young road cyclist with aspirations to compete on the world stage.

Nine months ago, Genevieve joined NZ Avocado in Tauranga as corporate services associate working closely with chief executive Jen Scoular and the wider team to support a variety of projects. These include board meetings and governance, managing annual planning timelines and undertaking activities to progress delivery.

"No day is the same and there is some travel involved. I am also a bit of a chatterbox and I get to network and engage with a lot of people across the horticulture sector, which is really valuable for me to understand the world of avocados better."

"A highlight so far was our growers' forum in Whangarei. I've been away from New Zealand for a long time, and it's been really exciting to reconnect with parts of Aotearoa I am less familiar with, and meet some of the growers and stakeholders I deal with over the phone or via email."

Genevieve is a strong advocate for women to consider careers in horticulture. "The opportunities are not limited in the ways people might think. You could come into horticulture from many different backgrounds and have a successful career."

**"You could come into horticulture from many different backgrounds and have a successful career"**

"I would like to see more boards with even numbers for males and females and more pathways to the top in place for women in this sector, which is why the Women in Horticulture is such a great initiative helping to bridge this gap." ●



To keep up to date with Women in Horticulture news and activities, join the membership database by emailing [info@women-in-hort.nz](mailto:info@women-in-hort.nz), everyone is welcome.



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Nearly 30 years after taking over the management of the Harper Vineyards orchard, Bruce Van Dorp has been recognised as a “fantastic grower” who is always willing to pass on his wealth of knowledge

## A grower with a heart of gold

*As a kid, Bruce Van Dorp watched with interest the flurry of activity taking place over the road from his semi-rural family home in Gisborne.*

By Kristine Walsh

**Just opposite – on the river side of Riverside Road – horticulture pioneer Jack Thorpe was planting some of the region's first commercial kiwifruit vines, and building a packhouse to boot.**

“It was fascinating to see all this activity in the neighbourhood,” Bruce says.

“So I stuck my nose in and at the age of 12 had got my first job, making kiwifruit boxes in the packhouse.”

Bruce's new boss was the trust Jack had formed with son Bill and other family members, and those early beginnings proved to be the start of a decades-long relationship.

Today, 43 years later, Bruce works for Bill and his partners managing their 23-hectare orchard Harper Vineyards where, just out of Gisborne, he oversees production of gold kiwifruit, persimmons and mandarins.

His generosity of sharing the knowledge he has gained over those decades this year saw him awarded the Outstanding Contribution award at First Fresh awards event, the Freshies.

And it's not the first time: Bruce has received that gong before, along with others related to the quality of his crops.

First Fresh managing director Ian Albers says Bruce not only works tirelessly and performs outstandingly on the orchard, but also goes out of his way to help other growers and is “a fountain of knowledge” for the First Fresh team.

“Bruce is an extremely likeable, down-to-earth bloke who is well known for having a heart of gold,” Ian says. “Basically, he's a fantastic grower with a wealth of knowledge that he is willing to pass on to those less learned.”



*With Harper Vineyards being one of the longest-established persimmon orchards in the country, manager Bruce Van Dorp has become known as an expert grower who is generous in sharing what he knows*

For his part, Bruce says that if you have something to offer the industry, why wouldn't you?

"I think it is important to share any information you can about any crop," he says. "Regardless of what you grow, consumers are looking for high-quality, great-tasting fruit and the more growers that get to that standard, the better it is for the whole industry."

Back to the beginning: it was no surprise that the pre-teen Bruce started off making boxes... his Dutch immigrant dad Peter "Pim" Van Dorp was a joiner known for the intricate work he did in the workshop that is to this day used by another son, Murray.

But he was soon put to work in the fledgling orchard and by the age of 16 he'd left school to work for the trust full-time, completing his horticultural apprenticeship along the way.

"Because it was all so new we had to make most of the packing equipment on site, which was interesting, but I really wanted to be outside so ended up full-time in the orchard."

"It was an exciting time as the trust was expanding with more kiwifruit, citrus and grapes out at Patutahi and Manutuke. We were developing new blocks from scratch so it was groundbreaking in more ways than one!"

That continued until, at the age of 19, Bruce was hanging out at Gisborne night spot The Silver Lair where he met his wife-to-be, Adele.

“

**I stuck my nose in and at the age of 12 had got my first job, making kiwifruit boxes in the packhouse**

"Dell was moving to Waipukurau for work so I went, too, and when we got there I said 'I'm going out to get a job'. An hour later I was back with the new job as foreman at Ascot Orchard."

Bruce took his experience developing new orchards to the role but with Ascot growing the different crops of nectarines, peaches and apples, he learned a lot, too.



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THE MORE GROWERS  
THAT GET TO THAT  
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INDUSTRY

"This was in the big apple boom of the mid-1980s and Ascot used to do contract work establishing new orchards, so we'd be out planting blocks of hundreds of acres for the big corporates," he says. "It was a real eye-opener, with lots to do and lots to learn."

Living in Hawke's Bay meant the newly-married Van Dorps missed 1988's catastrophic Cyclone Bola – which hit the weekend their first child, Jasmine was born – but by the time son Joshua arrived in 1990, they were back home.

"I was lucky enough to get work back with the Thorpes, managing and living on a 20-hectare kiwifruit block at Patutahi before we moved to Harper Vineyards, which Bill and his partners had established in 1981.

"It was a rugged time -- during the slump in the kiwifruit market many blocks went under, but they toughed it out and I've worked at Harper's ever since."

In fact, Bruce has been involved with the Thorpes pretty much his entire working life.

"They're such a proactive, creative family," he says. "To this day Bill is always keen to see the orchard be the best it can so we meet every week to look over what is happening, and what we could be working on to improve everything we do."

Not that it's all been plain sailing at Harper's, which is on heavy clay silt soil.

“

**It can be tough but, basically, if you want quality workers you have to pay them right and treat them right**

"We've certainly had a few losses – kiwifruit in particular don't like wet feet – but have combated that by putting in lots of extra drainage and humping and hollowing the rows, so water drains away."

Keeping a steady flow of labour, too, is an ongoing challenge that Bruce meets by supplementing his full-time team of more than a dozen with casual labour, groups of backpackers and

students bringing a festive air to the Harper family.

"It can be tough but, basically, if you want quality workers you have to pay them right and treat them right," he says.

"Having a happy workforce makes all the difference and the result is that we have people working at Harper's who have been here as long as I have."

Bruce Van Dorp no longer lives on site – at the turn of the new millennium he, Adele, and the two children moved into the century-old villa on their own block up the road at Patutahi.

Since losing his beloved Adele to a brain aneurysm in 2018, however, he's been tackling the "work in progress" of renovating the home on his own.

"Of course it's not the same without her, but you have to keep going," he says.

And while he grows a bit of citrus, most of his home block is leased out.

"I don't really have time to do anything with it... life's just too busy!" ●



# Let's Grow Together

*A guide to help plan orchards around Transpower transmission lines*

By Rachel McClung, Environmental Policy Advisor, HortNZ and  
Rebecca Eng, Senior Environmental Planner, Transpower New Zealand Ltd.

With the expansion of kiwifruit orchards in the Bay of Plenty near Transpower transmission lines, it became apparent that the rules and regulations for developing orchards near these lines were not always easy to understand.

Therefore, a guidance document 'Let's Grow Together' has been developed by Transpower New Zealand with New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (NZKGI) and Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ) to assist in orchard design.

Transpower is the owner and operator of the National Grid – the high voltage transmission network made up of more than 12,000km of lines and 160 substations connecting areas of electricity generation with towns and cities across New Zealand. The majority of transmission lines are on private land, or else cross over private land. Transpower is committed to working openly.

“

**The guide explains how orchards can safely develop around Transpower lines, while still making the most of the productive potential of the land**

The guide explains how orchards can safely develop around Transpower lines, while still making the most of the productive potential of the land. It contains explanations and diagrams to help growers to understand electrical safe distances. It also includes orchard design concepts and helps growers consider design matters such as access, vertical clearance distances, layout and clear space around support structures.

Considering these critical safety measures when planning your orchard design keeps your orchard safe.

While the guide has been developed for kiwifruit orchards, the guide can be used by any grower wanting to build crop structures around Transpower lines and the concepts are relevant for any orchard. ●



*Let's Grow Together* is available in hard copy from Transpower, NZKGI or HortNZ. It can also be found online at <https://www.transpower.co.nz/resources/design-guide-kiwifruit-orchards>

If you are planning a new orchard, we recommend that you contact your Transpower Landowner Liaison Officer first. They can help you to create an orchard design that is safe for you, your workers and the public.

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Michael Hill

# NZGAP delivers for the industry



## J&P TURNER – HELPING GROWERS WITH NZGAP

By Helena O'Neill

**The NZGAP (Good Agricultural Practice) system is a great way for J&P Turner's growers to keep on top of the increasing compliance requirements necessary to meet the Food Act and supermarket standards.**

J&P Turner supplier and export compliance manager Michael Hill says the system allows the company to help its growers.

"We use a NZGAP checklist and help the growers. I carry what I call my doctor's bag, my little black bag with all the bits of paper, so if a grower doesn't have it then we can help them. We also help them prepare their manuals ... I think NZGAP likes the concept of a grower group."

While the Food Act registration runs for two years, J&P Turner inspectors visit their growers annually to check compliance.

"With NZGAP once you're in the system you only have an audit every three years. We're visiting them annually, we're

updating the information annually, checking that everything is still right. That the spray diary is kept up to date, that the fertiliser diary is up to date, that the spill kit or the chemical storage is still adequate, these sorts of things."

Michael says that grower groups also help those who have English as a second language and who might be overwhelmed by technical language or compliance paperwork.

"Sometimes you have to go out and interpret a spray diary ... translate it from the grower's own language."

The amount of paperwork required in the industry is phenomenal, he says. J&P Turner staff from Tauranga and Central Otago help with grower inspections when needed to spread the load.

"Having been an orchardist, I can see 90% of what I need driving up the drive or through the orchard, or walking through the packhouse.

"In the early days, I used to help individual growers with their NZGAP applications. One of my strengths has been the ability to work with the growers. The growers are our customers, and likewise, the buyers are our customers as well."



There's also a growing interest in Food Act registration outside of the usual markets, he says.

"I think more and more of the farmers' markets are asking for a Food Act registration... and there are people who want to go to farmers' markets.

"The growers are getting concerned with the amount of compliance work that they have to do. The challenges will be as we have social practice and farm environment plans as add-ons - social practice will be essential."

The Social Practice module is designed to enable growers to demonstrate they meet both locally and globally recognised social practice standards for markets and regulators.

The Environment Management System (EMS) add-on is for growers who wish to manage their regional council's environmental requirements alongside their usual NZGAP audit. Environmental issues of concern to the council include nutrient management, soil management, irrigation management, and water body management.

J&P Turner has more than 100 growers in their NZGAP grower group and nearly 100 for their GLOBALG.A.P. growers.

"Through Damien (Farrelly) and NZGAP, they're registering both the NZGAP and the GLOBALG.A.P. growers for the Food Act as well," says Michael.

"When we first started our grower group it was with avocado

and cherry growers, then with a lot of vegetable growers.

"Export growers might notice a stronger local market or have a smaller crop better suited for the domestic market but need to meet Food Act requirements for their entire operation.

"We have a strong team of supply managers or field reps who may well have a grower who is GLOBALG.A.P. export last year, particularly something like avocados that tend to be biennial bearing, who the next year might be down to only two or three bins, so it's not worth doing the export and just get it packed for the local market."

J&P Turner Limited was formed in the 1990s by brothers Jeffery and Peter Turner and today is the parent company for the group's various marketing initiatives in fruit, vegetables and flowers, both within New Zealand and internationally.

Jeffery and Peter's great-grandfather Edward Turner set up Turners Mart (later to become T&G Global) in the 1890s, after he emigrated from England to New Zealand. Some of the family established J&P Turner in 1995 after the control and direction of the old family firm was taken over by offshore investors.

The group retains its strong family background and strong relationships with growers, Michael says.

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## NZGAP MULTI-SITE AUDIT BENEFITS GROWERS AND CONSUMERS

By Elaine Fisher

**A scheme which keeps costs down for growers while ensuring New Zealand consumers enjoy safe and sustainably grown fruit, is proving a winner for smaller growers supplying Trevelyan's Pack & Cool in the Bay of Plenty.**

The post-harvest company offers the benefits of the NZGAP (New Zealand Good Agricultural Practice) multi-site audit process to 115 of its grower sites who produce a small number of bins of fruit for local market, saving growers hefty compliance fees while ensuring their produce meets food safety and sustainability standards.

Christine Draffin, Trevelyan's quality and compliance manager says the multi-site audit has been in place for just over a year and consumers are among those to benefit.

"Some may say this produce is for local market, not export, so why does it need to be audited? However, I believe that we as New Zealand consumers are also entitled to access to safe food."

To ensure food is safe, New Zealand supermarkets require suppliers to be audited. Christine says the cost of individual audits, which could range from \$700 to \$1,200, could be prohibitive for growers supplying two to 10 bins of fruit a season.

That is why Trevelyan's introduced a multi-site audit process for growers who supply small volumes of avocados, limes, lemons and feijoas to the packhouse. "Currently the audit costs are pretty much absorbed within our packing costs."

Many of the avocado growers are those with new orchards not yet in full production. They will ultimately move on to export, but in the meantime come under the NZGAP multi-site audit. Growers of other crops are mainly "mum and dad orchardists who are never going to produce enough for export," Christine says.

“

**I believe that we as New Zealand consumers are also entitled to access to safe food**

Under the multi-site programme, Trevelyan's registers growers with NZGAP (Good Agricultural Practice) and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). "One of our team members visits every grower to make sure they understand what is required to be compliant."

Those requirements include water quality, the storage and use of chemicals, on-orchard health and safety provisions including toilet and handwashing facilities, equipment, compliant harvesters and contractors, staff training and appropriate signage.

In January and February each year Trevelyan's team of inspectors visit all the 115 multi-site registered growers, who are spread throughout the wider Bay of Plenty and Coromandel. Third Party Audits are carried out annually by the independent Conformity Assessment Body, SGS NZ Limited.

"Our inspectors and grower reps are very involved with our growers, many of whom have just a few trees and have other jobs off the orchard. They are often new to the industry so don't all have the knowledge and struggle with the requirements of compliance, and so appreciate information from our grower reps and through Trevelyan's avocado and kiwifruit field days and regular newsletters."

“

**NZGAP gives customers confidence that the fruit they purchase has been grown in a safe, healthy and environmentally sustainable way**

Christine says bringing growers under the compliance umbrella also ensures there are no breaches of Trevelyan's own compliance standards, which as well as NZGAP include standards required by the Ministry for Primary Industries, BRC (British Retail Consortium), BioGro for organic produce, Avoco for avocado exports and Zespri for kiwifruit exports.

Yvonne Smythe, Trevelyan's GAP inspector, believes government agencies did not realise how many growers of small volumes of produce were supplying the local market when legislation for Food Act compliance was drawn up. "We have 115 growers and are only one facility. There are many other facilities and growers out there also affected. This multi-site audit is about us connecting with our growers and helping them with compliance. It's not hard for us because we live in a world of compliance."

Among the businesses to benefit from the multi-site audit is BayFarms NZ Ltd which sells avocados online throughout New Zealand. Trevelyan's not only offers NZGAP compliance to its small growers, but also packs fruit for nationwide distribution.

BayFarms director Alister Hawkey says NZGAP gives customers confidence that the fruit they purchase has been grown in a safe, healthy and environmentally sustainable way.

The company supplies avocados, on average within 10 days of harvest, to the public, restaurants, and cafés year-round. "This ensures the shelf life of the fruit is in the fruit bowl, so enabling consumers to enjoy the best quality avocados." ●



## SOCIAL PRACTICE ADD-ON WELCOMED

By Rose Mannering

**Eskdale plum growers Nicky and Ian Dockary are the first growers to be audited under the NZGAP Social Practice add-on.**

NZGAP certification provides assurance for the safe and sustainable production of fruit and vegetables in New Zealand. The Social Practice add-on enables growers to demonstrate they meet both locally and globally recognised social practice standards for markets and regulators.

Nicky says it was a seamless process to incorporate their labour practices as well as phytosanitary and other auditing required for NZGAP in their regular annual audit.

The Dockarys grow a range of different plum varieties for local consumption, through MG Marketing, as well as Black Doris plums for processing for Heinz Wattie's.

The husband-and-wife team do most of the work on their nine-hectare plum block themselves but get staff in to thin and pick.

The Social Practice add-on looked at their labour practices, checking employment contracts, paid breaks, wage rates and legality of staff. "We just had to add a couple of sentences to our employment contracts to make them compliant," she says.

"We were happy to show we are doing everything in a socially responsible way, so people have peace of mind when they buy our fruit."

They maintain a strong relationship with a local family who are their first port of call at thinning time. The pinch time in



*Nicky and Ian Dockary on the tools, pruning their plums on their Eskdale orchard*

their labour supply is at Black Doris harvest time at the end of January. "We have relied on backpackers in the past."

Nicky was thrilled to see the SSE (Supplementary Seasonal Employment) Visa extended so she hopes they can find workers for the coming season.

The labour shortage has hit the Dockarys hard, and they are future proofing their business by removing poorer returning varieties to make sure they have enough people to get the crop off in the coming season.

Remaining trees get a strong haircut to reduce them in height to make ground thinning and picking possible.

The Dockarys need between 10 and 15 seasonal staff for their thinning and picking requirements. Nicky says the Social Practice add-on has also given them peace of mind when employing labour contractors, as certification shows they are treating their workers well. ●

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*Regan Judd receives the award*

## Regan Judd scoops award for second time

*A focus on consistency ensured T&G orchard foreman Regan Judd will represent the Hawke's Bay region at the national Young Grower contest in September.*

By Rose Mannering

**Regan was crowned the Hawke's Bay Young Fruitgrower for the second time in a very tight battle for the title on 4 June at Toitoti, the Hawke's Bay Arts and Events Centre.**

Regan grew up on a dairy farm near Bulls, but after a stint working on orchards opted to follow a horticulture career path. He graduated from Massey University in 2017 with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science majoring in Horticulture and was taken on by T&G in their graduate programme. He has worked his way up to foreman in the Thompson sector of orchards near Havelock North.

"I entered the contest to challenge myself against my peers, but also to meet other people in the industry, and to build contacts," he says. Regan won the regional event in 2019 and came third in the national competition, but last year's event was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Regan finished three points ahead of his nearest rival and first-time entrant, Liam Sykes, an assistant manager for Freshco at Puketapu. Regan's focus on consistency across the competition paid off in the battle for the award; he was one of eight vying for the top spot in Hawke's Bay.

The contest comprised a practical session on 3 June, run by the Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers' Association in conjunction with the National Horticultural Field Days. Challenges included analysing soil test results to recommend a fertiliser programme, irrigation repair and programming, using virtual reality goggles to make pruning cuts, filling an empty bucket with water using a digger, a building challenge, identifying pests and diseases, and market access issues.

This was followed up by a quiz, and speeches at the formal dinner and prize-giving the following day.





Blindfolded taste testing in the Hortisports section was a true test of the contestants' palate for apples

Regan admitted preparing and delivering the speech was his biggest challenge, and particularly as his speech topic, 'Supply Chain Optimisation', was outside of his own knowledge base. He spoke to people within his organisation to help him research his speech topic. With increased pressure worldwide on shipping space availability, he promoted industry collaboration to help with this going forward.

This year's national final is in Wellington on 22 and 23 September, where six regional finalists will compete for their share of \$30,000 in prizes.

Regan is motivated to enter the competition to keep pushing himself forward. He is also keen to pass these skills on to other people in the industry. "I grew up on the family dairy farm, but I like orcharding, and I haven't looked back," he says.

“

**The calibre of contestants was excellent, with the battle for first and second particularly close**

Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers Association president Richard Pentreath says the organising team was thrilled with how the competition ran. "The calibre of contestants was excellent, with the battle for first and second particularly close; this bodes well for next time," he says.

He was particularly impressed with the calibre of the speeches, with competitors "owning their topics", they were all really on target.

A new award was sprung on contestants this year, the Kai Mahi award for professionalism and leadership qualities, which was won by Liam Sykes.

Horticulture New Zealand President Barry O'Neil says the competition plays an important role in supporting the next generation of horticulture industry leaders. "Each of the eight contestants delivered excellent, insightful speeches on a range of topics covering the challenges and opportunities facing the industry. It's clear contestants have an amazing future in the industry." ●

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Rockit chairman John Loughlin and Hastings Mayor Sandra Hazelhurst plant a ceremonial tree at the packhouse opening in Hastings

# Future of Rockit unveiled

*New chief executive Mark O'Donnell is buoyant about the future of the tiny apple, Rockit, at the launch of its new packhouse and office facility in Hastings on June 1.*

By Rose Mannering

**This state-of-the-art facility in the Irongate industrial park is set over 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> and showcases the latest in digital innovation. Automated packing lines, coolstore technology and assisted processing mean that in full production, Rockit aims to pack 400,000 to 500,000 tubes of its fully mature snack apples each day, delivering 120 million apples to consumers around the globe this year alone.**

"Our business is moving at a huge pace; last year our volumes were up by 40%, this year nearly 60%. In five years' time, we will be delivering 500 million apples."

Mark reiterated that the tiny fruit sold in pouches is not a commodity product.

"Innovation is a part of our DNA, which is why we took a punt on the smallest apple. Our future is very exciting."

Artificial intelligence (AI) will play a major role in ensuring efficient sorting, packing and storage within the packhouse. Apples are washed and dried automatically before specialised sorters scan the fruit, determining size and colour and checking for defects.

New robotic machinery designed by Hastings business Haden and Custance (HC Automated Solutions), automatically loads the apples into tubes before packaging into boxes. Plastic tubes will be manufactured on site, on the mezzanine floor of the packhouse, before being conveyed down to the packing line.

## A decade for angel investor

Investor Steve Saunders acknowledged the business has come a long way since he became involved a decade ago this December. Founder Phil Alison called on Enterprise Angels for funding, with his global plan to produce an apple pouch for the snacking market. He held rights to the Plant & Food Research bred apple Prem96A, now marketed as Rockit.

Steve is a member of Tauranga Enterprise Angels, a group of businessmen who invest at an early stage in innovative ideas. "We met marketers from around the world and set out to rapidly grow the brand; a small apple in a tube in the snacking market was a novel idea. Trends





Inside the packhouse, robotics at work. (Credit: Hawke's Bay Today)

change, there was a demand for healthy snacks on the run – that is how I became involved in the Rockit journey.”

The founding syndicate started with 60 hectares of orchard grafted over to the new variety, then a further 43ha planted on the Plant & Food Research FOPs (Future Orchard Production) 2-D growing system. Total plantings have now reached 500ha in Hawke's Bay. All-year-round supply will be ensured with a further 200ha planted in the Northern Hemisphere.

### Plantings expand to South Island

Orchards with a direct link to Māori through land and investment have been developed. Most recently Ngāi Tahu have come on board as an investor and are keen to spearhead Rockit plantings in the South Island, particularly North Canterbury and Nelson.

Local Māori have developed joint interests for planting and supplying Rockit apples to the new facility, and Ngāti Kahungunu leader Ngahiwi Tomoana bestowed the name for the Irongate hub, Te Ipu.

Planting is underway in Gisborne, and new developments are being appraised in Wairoa. There is also considerable capacity still existing in Hawke's Bay for growth, attracting land conversion from other uses. They are confident better returns will attract conversion from other varieties.

Chairman John Loughlin joined the Rockit journey six years ago and says growth has been at lightning pace in that time. “On our projected growth we will need to extend this new packhouse in three years, and we will need a second packhouse before the end of the decade.”

Robotic arms are filling tubes, the journey has led to immense excitement around the world. “We launched a video on YouTube and in six days it has had 100 million views. “Something extraordinary is happening here in Hawke's Bay, this is the apple capital. We are supported by local government infrastructure, and NZ Trade and Enterprise has supported us around the world. Callaghan Institute has helped with new technologies.”

John believes the Rockit journey is still in its early stages, the demand for great products is truly immense, almost insatiable. Rockit apples represent 0.0001% of the apples marketed in the world. “The magic is in the marketing; we are very very niche and can be the highest revenue item.”

### New branding launched


Rockit Global's general manager of global marketing, Julian Smith, unveiled fresh branding for Rockit apples at today's ceremony, explaining that a reimagining of the logo and colour palette will help to widen Rockit's appeal overseas.

“We're still instantly recognisable, but we've evolved our brand personality, story and position in the market so that we truly stand out,” Julian said.

Apples in tubes are the singular focus, one brand one product, an apple packaged for snacking convenience. Fruit is exported to 30 countries and markets continue to grow in North America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Hastings Mayor Sandra Hazelwood congratulated the leadership and foresight of Rockit management at the packhouse opening. “You are a significant employer and make considerable investment in our region and our economy.”

She says the Rockit story is part of a wider pipfruit story, where the apple industry has grown from \$300 million to \$900 million in a decade. ●




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NZKGI new CEO Colin Bond (right) with Mark Mayston, chairman of NZKGI

## Intense listening and learning curve for new CEO

*Colin Bond has been an orchardist for six years but since his appointment as chief executive of New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Inc (NZKGI) in May he's been on an intensive learning curve about the wider industry.*

By Elaine Fisher

**With his wife Michelle, Colin owns a small kiwifruit orchard at Te Puna near Tauranga and until his recent appointment, was ANZ bank's Bay of Plenty regional manager - commercial and agriculture.**

"I know a little about the industry from six years of orchard ownership, but there are dozens of growers with more than 40 years' experience in the industry, so it is important I learn from their experience, as well as that of the NZKGI executive, forum members and staff to more fully understand the industry and make decisions about where NZKGI goes next. To do



that I've done a lot of listening during the first few weeks in the job."

That listening included attending grower roadshows in Tauranga, Te Puke and Katikati in June. "The comments, concerns and questions at those meetings were valid and thought provoking."

Among other issues, growers expressed concern about the impact on the New Zealand industry of illegally planted G3 kiwifruit in China, this season's soft fruit, and the shortage of labour.



"Labour was a challenge pre-Covid, but Covid and border restrictions have ramped that up. I am heartened by the conversations I have had in the past few weeks with people trying to solve the labour shortage long-term."

The NZKGI labour attraction scheme and initiatives supported by the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry for Primary Industries have been successful, but in a climate of low unemployment and with borders largely closed, the kiwifruit industry hasn't solved its labour issues.

"The labour issue is also a reflection of the growth and huge opportunities created by the kiwifruit industry, and so is not totally a bad problem to have as it's a symptom of our success."

Finding solutions is challenging and while automation will help the industry be more efficient and improve the calibre of work opportunities, the growth in fruit volumes coming on means the demand for staff numbers will be more likely to increase in the short-term than to drop, Colin says.

“

**The labour issue is also a reflection of the growth and huge opportunities created**

"While I understand that the government's focus on employing New Zealanders first is very valid, the industry will continue to struggle with labour. That's despite the living wage being applied across the entire industry and many jobs earning above the living wage."

"There is still a gap that workers from the Pacific islands have filled. Employment in the kiwifruit industry has been an important part of the economy for many island nations, as well as being mutually beneficial for us. Backpackers have also been valuable, providing labour and giving them the opportunity to experience New Zealand while on working holidays."

Taking the longer-term view, NZKGI has a focus on education aimed at attracting young people into the industry. "We are of course not the only industry struggling to attract labour. The wider horticultural and primary sectors, hospitality and construction are struggling too. It's a highly competitive market."

Compliance and changing regulatory frameworks are also impacting the kiwifruit industry and Colin says it is the role of NZKGI to help growers understand and prepare for what is ahead.

"Growers can't afford to ignore these issues, and while they are challenging there is the opportunity to solve problems faster and more efficiently than anyone else. We will push



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back where appropriate in the right areas to influence outcomes, but overall we have to adapt. We want to be ahead of change, but some key dates will be enforced so we must give growers as much time as possible to adapt."

NZKGI is prepared for the rapidly changing regulatory environment. "A lot of excellent work has already been done and it is most pleasing to see the portfolio approach set up by Nikki Johnson (former chief executive)."

The six portfolios are: industry stability, performance, communications, labour and education, external relations and organisational management. Individual staff and forum members have responsibilities for the portfolios which suit their skill sets.

While he describes himself as a "passive grower" Colin says owning an orchard does give him a first-hand perspective of what growers experience.

"It's clear to me that this is a very seasonal industry, and the first challenge is living season to season with all the variables that can bring. On our orchard we have experienced poor pollination and bad budbreak, and most recently this year, the shortage of labour. In previous seasons we would have had 30 pickers in the orchard harvesting all our fruit in four hours. This season we struggled to get 10 pickers and it took two days to pick the fruit.

"This is reflective of the challenges out there and while I know my issues are minor, they do give me an understanding from the grower perspective and will help me to advocate on behalf of growers to Zespri and national and local government."

“

**We will push back where appropriate in the right areas to influence outcomes, but overall we have to adapt**

Colin, who grew up on a sheep and cropping farm on the Canterbury coast where the Rangitata River flows out to sea, first became involved with the kiwifruit industry through his ANZ role during the Psa-V vine disease crisis a decade ago. "I was impressed at how all sectors of the industry collaborated to work together to solve that crisis."

That was among the reasons he and Michelle bought a kiwifruit orchard. "Given my rural background I wanted our children to experience that kind of life too. We had thought to buy a lifestyle block, but the kiwifruit orchard gave us the best of both worlds, lifestyle and in a financial sense as well."

Michelle mows the orchard and Colin "does what I'm told by our manager." Their children Sophie (14), Peyton (12) and Elliot (10) enjoy the rural life too, Sophie attending Tauranga Girls' College and her younger siblings, Omokoroa No 1 School.

Although he grew up on a farm, Colin says a talent for numbers meant it seemed logical to complete a commerce degree at Otago University. "I began working for ANZ after graduating and though I never intended to spend 22 years in commerce, ANZ was fantastic to work for and every time I thought of leaving, another job with the bank came up."

“

**People and relationships are among my skills and as chief executive of NZKGI I can advocate for growers to make a real difference**

It was the chief executive role with NZKGI which finally tempted Colin away. "Having seen the industry's positive response to Psa-V and then owning an orchard got me thinking that if I was to leave banking, I would want to be part of horticulture, kiwifruit specifically. When this opportunity came up I was really excited.

"People and relationships are among my skills and as chief executive of NZKGI I can advocate for growers to make a real difference and it will matter."

Outside of work and the orchard, Colin enjoys fishing and tramping. With a background as a player himself, Colin coaches Peyton's hockey team and is also a trustee of the Tauranga Arts Festival. "These two roles are about giving back to hockey which has given me some fantastic opportunities and to the Bay of Plenty which has been awesome for me and my family."

Mark Mayston, chairman of NZKGI, says Colin is well equipped for the chief executive position and will continue the work Nikki Johnson has begun.

"Colin brings a wide range of skills and experience to the chief executive role and I am confident that he will lead NZKGI well in advocating and increasing value for growers, building on the strong work that Nikki Johnson leaves behind.

"The appointment of Colin is exciting for NZKGI and our role with a growing industry. It also reflects continuity in NZKGI's mission to advocate, protect and enhance the commercial and political interests of New Zealand kiwifruit growers."

Mark says the industry still faces a number of challenges despite its recent success and Colin will help lead the organisation's response.

"NZKGI has an extraordinary opportunity to support growers throughout this period of rapid growth. We have to lead conversations with industry, government and wider stakeholders to ensure the industry grows with the best interests of growers at front of mind.

"These factors have driven the decision for the executive committee to appoint a person with a strong leadership background, and with first-hand knowledge of our industry, to the role of chief executive." ●



Sally says organisers were nervous leading into this year's event after the pattern of field days had been broken, and the threat of lockdowns remains. However, strong groundwork had been laid to host an event with wide appeal for the horticultural industry, educators, and industry participants.

In 2019 the event expanded to a two-day affair, and this format was maintained this year. A new record of 75 trade exhibits participated in the field days on 2 and 3 June. For mowing firm Trimax from Tauranga, the two-day exodus was worth the effort. "It was our first time at the show here, genuine enquiry for product has meant we have sold a few machines here," he says.



*Everything is put on the line contesting the 1931 Ralph Paynter Shield for the best Tug'O'War team. This year T&G teams proved their weight, with an all-T&G final. A record number of teams put their weight into a tightly fought contest*

scheme workers, is of real concern. The market is growing 25% in the next three years, there are just not enough people to even drive our sprayers," he says.

Vic says he has real concerns about the mental health of growers. "It is hard on growers when they have a team of 40 workers but only two turn up; apples worth \$35 a box can be reduced to 75 cents a kilogram for juice if they are not picked at the right time."

Argiles representative Bennet Williams (TRS Hastings) found his machines drew a great deal of interest; the mobile picking platforms are at the top end of the platform market, at \$136,000 for a base model platform and trailer.

Sally says the field day organisers were thrilled to support a Yara NZ initiative to launch a three-pronged Women in Horticulture programme. Yara commercial manager Glen Bayliss officiated at the launch, which included a Women in Horticulture feature lunch, a panel session 'Heroes in Horticulture' and the awarding of a Women in Horticulture Scholarship.

New Zealand Food and Grocery Council chief executive Katherine Rich, a 1999-2008 National Party List MP, was the keynote speaker at the feature lunch. "Different people bring different things to the table, women may add creativity or innovative ways of thinking," she said.

Women are often not confident to make themselves heard. "Women make up half of the graduates at a university level, but we don't see that same proportion in the workplace," Katherine said.

"This industry has a very traditional gender balance; we need more women in leadership roles." At a recent meeting of chief executives in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, she was the only woman.

Katherine is a champion of food and beverage manufacturers in New Zealand, and says it is an exciting time to be in this sector. "Women are translating products of the land into grocery lines people want."

Katherine says she still faces biases when decisions are made "at the golf club or the pub", but she says it is important for women to "always turn up", no matter how tough it is.

Lizzie Wickham, Agronomist for Wattie's was named the first recipient of the Women in Horticulture Scholarship to an outstanding woman in horticulture. After graduating from university, Lizzie worked for SGS before landing her current role with Heinz Wattie's.

B A Pumps & Sprayers won the coveted Ravensdown Innovation & Environmental Award for their new technology Smart-Apply® which is a density-based spray system that utilises cutting-edge sensor technology, providing viticulturists and horticulturalists with more efficient spray application and an abundance of data and other benefits for growers.

In winning the contest they join a strong alumnus of past winners including Plant Detection Systems, Scionon, Tow and Blow, Rockit Apples, Hydratorq with their BioFume Ozone product, NZ Seaweeds and Metris. "The primary purpose of the award is to provide recognition and a way to celebrate the innovation and world class technology that New Zealand businesses are using to transform and grow their industry," Sally says.





The 75 trade exhibitors enjoyed good enquiries at the field days, with 5,000 people through the gate



TRS Branch Manager Bennet Williams demonstrating the Argiles picking platform

The best trade exhibit was won by Hydralada, and the tightly contested Hydralada competition was won by Andrew Sambrook of Vesty Orchards. The ECR Equipment Forklift Competition was won by Dean Reti.

The education programme was extremely successful. Over 160 school children participated in the "Future Up" programme which was targeted at secondary aged school children. The programme was launched to give students opportunities to interact with horticulture and agriculture in the Primary Sector. "Here at the Hawke's Bay A&P Society, we are passionate about growing the knowledge bank and capability of the Primary Sector with our future generation. We recognise that due to an increasingly urbanised population, many students do not have direct links to farms, orchards and food production systems, which in turn means that their understanding of future opportunities may be limited," Sally says.

The students engaged with and rotated around a variety of interactive 15-minute modules hosted by industry experts, and had opportunities to network with industry professionals and further education providers. Participating schools included Hawera High School, Napier Boys' High School, Francis Douglas Memorial College, Te Aute College and Flaxmere College.

The Field Days also hosts the practical rounds of the Hawke's Bay Young Fruitgrower of the Year contest, which culminates with the speechmaking and announcements at a prizegiving dinner on the Friday night. ●

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## SUMMERFRUIT NZ CONFERENCE REPORT



Former chair Tim Jones presents the Mack Nicol award to Tim Hope

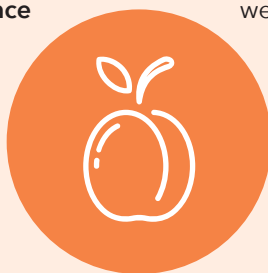
# Summerfruit focus on way ahead

*Focusing on a visible pathway forward underpinned the Summerfruit NZ Conference in Napier on 9 and 10 June.*

By Rose Mannering

Chief executive Kate Hellstrom says the conference provided opportunity for growers and industry participants to get together and celebrate wins after a very challenging year. "Last year's conference fell victim to Covid, so it was very important to us to get together as an industry," she says. The conference provided a good environment to think about challenges ahead. Speakers covered the economy, market access, export freight, labour, the science of growing, water, and digital media.

The conference, aptly named "Growing Strong - Success in a Changing World" focused on increasing resilience across a broad platform: our orchards, the environment and personally. "We had a great mixture of speakers, which



were well received; everyone found something of interest," she says.

Bay View summerfruit grower Roger Brownlie (Hawke's Bay) was elected as chairman, replacing Tim Jones who was recognised for his ability for strategic thinking, after a six-year stint in the chair. Tim has been on the Summerfruit NZ board for 13 years, and is the chief executive of 45 South, which owns and manages 400 hectares of cherries. He is also a member of the Central Otago Fruitgrowers' Association and a director of Seasonal Solutions.

Roger Brownlie says he is happy to take over the chairman's role when the organisation is in good health. He believes having north and south represented at the top will only





**1** Keynote speaker Tangaroa Walker talks about mahi, mana and life on the land, **2** New chairman Roger Brownlie with new life member Gary Bennetts

be good for Summerfruit NZ. Trudi Webb, Webb's Fruit, Central Otago, was elected vice chairman.

The well-attended conference dinner on Thursday evening saw three awards given. Carmel Walsh of GSA New Zealand Cargo received a special recognition award for her help securing airfreight for export cherries. Roxburgh grower, Gary Bennetts, was made a life member for his contribution to Summerfruit NZ and the summerfruit industry as chairman from 2008 to 2016. The Mack Nicol Award for Commitment to Excellence recognises someone with a great future in the industry and was awarded to Centralpac's Tim Hope.

The final day of the conference went out in the field, a "Kick the Dirt" tour included bumble bee producers Biobees, Fruitpackers RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) scheme worker accommodation, and the Fulfords' Omahuri packhouse. ●

## REGENERATIVE HORTICULTURE: ORGANIC SYSTEMS CARBON RICH

**Principal scientist Plant & Food Research, Brent Clothier, told Summerfruit NZ Conference delegates his organisation has gained a Sustainable Farming Fund to research regenerative horticulture.**

In this study, the 'old' idea of sustainability has been replaced by regenerative farming, or improving the environment.

Through the decades, the focus of horticulture has changed from yield in the 1970s, to sustainability in the 1980s, to climate change in the 1990s, to most recently food miles in the last decade. "Intensified monocultures are not sustainable in the longer term," Brent says.

Taking a regenerative approach leads to improvements in waterways, soils, minimum wages, and ecological credentials.

“

**Taking a regenerative approach leads to improvements in waterways, soils, minimum wages, and ecological credentials**

Already specific research to quantify horticulture that will lead to improvements in the environment are underway. "We are working with Zespri and T&G on those credentials," Brent says. Supermarkets are the gatekeepers to unlock premium prices to reward better production.

"This research gives us an opportunity to design regenerative practices that are unique to New Zealand Aotearoa," he says. With the Ministry for Primary Industries, design criteria have been set which look at the health of the land, communities, biodiversity and people.

"The expectation is to improve the profitability of farming; 113 agencies around land and water are involved in this national challenge. We are all looking for pathways to produce a national narrative."

The outcomes will be about social well-being, economic resilience, market advantage and soil health. "There is heaps of stuff we can do; the aims tie in with the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment," Brent explains.

These ideas are touched on in books like *Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution*, written by American environmentalists Paul Hawken, Amory Lovin and Hunter Lovin. "We have temporarily exceeded the carrying capacity of the world, which has put us in decline," Brent says. United States physicists have marvelled at the length of time production systems have existed in China,

some for 4,000 years. A key factor was the investment in carbon of all kinds, from the addition of ash to waste in production systems.

Goals of perennial horticulture are quite different to those of agriculture. Agriculture aims for more vegetative growth in the form of grass, whereas horticulture does not always want vegetative vigour. "There is a lot more subtlety in horticultural regenerative practices, it is not just about building up soil fertility," he says.

“

**Our future task will be designing a New Zealand based regenerative farming approach which links bio-physical with socio-economic outcomes**

Early studies have yielded interesting results; a 25-year-old kiwifruit orchard stores 0.5 tonne/hectare/year more than a 10-year-old kiwifruit orchard in the top 500mm to 1m of soil. With apples in Hawke's Bay, carbon in the row decreases where sprays have been used; considerable difference was also noted between the weed strip and the planted swarth. Vineyards analysed similarly showed carbon content was being degraded.

Organic systems showed higher levels of carbon compared to integrated systems. "There is a very different carbon investment in organic compared to integrated production systems although both showed an overall carbon degradation."

Structure and carbon are very different for both, organic soils showed greater earthworm numbers, greater microbial biomass, and macroporosity features were also vastly different. "Organic soils had three times higher macroporosity – think of it like freeways for air and water through the soil.

More organic matter and carbon in the soil acts to trap nitrogen, stop leaching and make it more available to the plant. Regenerative practices might include the addition of mulch where carbon is depleted in the soil.

"There is a goldilocks relationship of carbon, nitrogen and macroporosity," he says. Over time eco-efficiency will be measured, weighing up social economic performance against environmental impact.

"Our future task will be designing a New Zealand based regenerative farming approach which links bio-physical with socio-economic outcomes." ●

## GROWING SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE CHERRY PRODUCTION

**Opportunity exists to improve efficiency in sweet cherry production, Dr Matt Whiting says.**

Matt was the keynote speaker at the New Zealand Summerfruit Conference in Napier on 9 to 11 June. Appearing via video link, Matt says millions of research dollars have been committed to improving cherry growing systems, and new programmes for the future have been approved which will continue to refine mechanisation and automation in the field.

Matt is associate professor at Washington State University; he leads the stonefruit physiology programme there with research into the integration of mechanisation and automation and developing planar orchard systems.

He commented on the massive explosion of New Zealand cherry plantings, particularly in Central Otago, since he was last invited to speak at the Summerfruit Conference in 2013. Cherry production is expensive, traditionally with big trees and small fruit creating a need to improve labour safety and production efficiency.

There are 20,000 hectares of sweet cherries grown in Washington State, and when young blocks are taken out of the calculation, blocks produce between 14 and 16 tonnes a hectare.



**The key to a successful cherry production system starts with good genetic material, and a simple planar growing system that can be mechanised in the future**

Work on comparing different growing systems indicated the UFO (Upright Fruiting Offshoot) system came out on top, with the best light interception, and ease of management in the orchard. UFO systems lend themselves toward mechanisation. Trials compared Spanish Bush, KGB (Kym Green Bush), three upright steep leader, centre leader, slender spindle, Tatura and UFO. The systems were judged on their light interception, efficiency, simplicity and suitability to mechanisation. UFO came out on top on each of the criteria, followed closely by the Tatura system.

A 2-D UFO system produces vertical wood, which their research has shown fruits better than horizontal fruiting wood. The key to a successful cherry production system starts with good genetic material, and a simple planar growing system that can be mechanised in the future, he says.

Even without automation, a UFO system offers considerable labour savings. Hand pickers are twice as efficient in a UFO system compared to a traditional open centre. "In the same acreage you either need half the pickers, or you move twice





as fast." The UFO system helps reduce variability among pickers as less experience is needed in ladder placement.

### Mechanisation pays dividends

Mechanised pruning and harvesting trials were conducted on Ranier cherries on a Gisela G5 rootstock in Washington State.

"UFO pruning is very easy, there is no selectively choosing branches; using a machine to prune is 13 times faster than by hand." In Washington State in the desert, there is not as much disease pressure on 'dirty cuts' made by machine. Each tree requires three passes, but despite this it is still 13 times faster. "Even so we still have concern regarding disease transfer," he says.

The same benefits apply to an after-harvest prune, at six minutes per tree it is 23 to 29 times faster than pruning by hand and cleans out the canopy. There is a price to pay in terms of fruit weight, which is larger with hand pruning, 12.1 grams, compared to 11.3 grams with machine pruning.

There are also obvious wins when it comes to the cost of pruning. A full machine prune is 4.5 times cheaper, but after one year of full machine pruning, it is necessary to do a combination of machine and hand pruning. "The cost of the machine is covered if used over 23 hectares in one year," Matt says.

Summer pruning by machine also has benefits, but it is important to get the timing correct. A machine summer prune of side shoots to let light in and aid fruit colouring reduced soluble solids in the fruit three weeks before, but had little effect 10 days before harvest.

New research work is being undertaken to pursue a 'shake and catch' style of picking machines. Tree architecture needs to tie in with the picking machine. The preferred style for the study is UFO, or a Y trellis.

Further work is being carried out on mechanical collection of pollen, then mixing the pollen suspended in liquid and applying it as a spray. "If it can be made to work, we won't need pollinators or pollinisers". ●



## NOTICE OF ELECTION & NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

Kiwifruit New Zealand is established under the Kiwifruit Export Regulations 1999 for the purpose of authorising Zespri to export New Zealand grown kiwifruit, to determine collaborative marketing applications, and to monitor and enforce measures that mitigate the potential costs and risks of a single desk exporter.

The Kiwifruit New Zealand Board consists of six members of which three members are elected by producers for a three-year term. Due to one member's term expiring on 30th September 2021, KNZ will be conducting an election in the coming months to fill that position.

### VOTING ELIGIBILITY:

Producers who are eligible to vote in the election are:

1. the owners of land in New Zealand on which kiwifruit is produced for export sale; or
2. such other persons determined by the Board to be producers of such kiwifruit

All producers will be receiving a Notice of Election which will be mailed early July 2021. If you believe you are eligible to vote in the election, and do not receive a Notice of Election, please contact Kiwifruit New Zealand (details below). To be eligible to vote, producers are required to provide sufficient evidence that they qualify as a producer. Based on the information provided, the Board will determine the eligibility to vote.

### NOMINATIONS:

Nominations are invited for the election of one Director to the Board of Kiwifruit New Zealand. The election will be held in September 2021.

To request a candidate nomination form, please contact KNZ at the details below. If more than one nomination is received a postal vote will be held. The voting papers will be posted to all producers on 27th August 2021.

The candidate receiving the most votes will take office for a three-year term effective from 1 October 2021.

### TIMETABLE

Nominations open	26 July 2021
Nominations close	9 August 2021
Voting papers posted to producers	27 August 2021
Voting opens	30 August 2021
Voting closes	13 September 2021
Results announced	14 September 2021
Newly elected Director to take office	1 October 2021

### Contact:

Amy Te Whetu  
PO Box 4683 Mount Maunganui South, 3149  
Phone: (07) 572 3685 Email: [admin@knz.co.nz](mailto:admin@knz.co.nz)



*Nigel has been growing and breeding feijoas for nearly three decades*

## Breeding a better feijoa

*Nigel Ritson is working with feijoas that can be stored in the chiller for 100 days and still taste good seven days after they have been taken out.*

By Anne Hardie

**The implications of growing feijoas that can be successfully stored for that length of time and still taste good are huge for growers. But though Nigel has bred fruit that can achieve that success, he says there's still a long way to go before he has a cultivar ready for the market.**

Nigel isn't your average plant breeder. For starters he isn't a research scientist and there's no funding for his plant breeding which leans towards fanatical. Hundreds of pages of spreadsheets record every detail about the trees and fruit on his lifestyle property near Takaka in Golden Bay.

He happened into feijoa plant breeding after his life fell apart and he moved to a cheap block of land three decades ago with two young boys who happened to like feijoas. Which was fortunate because the pakihi soils are pretty tough to grow anything. Infertile and impervious, even feijoas struggled, with those at the bottom of the sloped land succumbing to the waterlogged soil. A digger created



a humped and hollowed landscape on the block to drain the soil and create mounds for the plants to grow.

Since then he has grown up to 3,000 feijoa trees, until his obsession with finding the ultimate fruit saw him cull all but 50-or-so trees. He's now in the throes of replanting from those remaining top trees to get a fruit that combines incredible taste, good handling, disease resistance and the ability to store well so it can be shipped around the world.

He hasn't fertilised the older trees for 10 years and new plantings just get enough fertiliser to get going. It's all part of his goal of producing varieties that not only taste good and have all the other important attributes for fruit, but also grow on tough trees.

His first 600 feijoa trees came from the then Riwaka Research Centre more than 20 years ago when its feijoa funding ended and he teamed up with experienced





*New plantings on the humped pakihi soil*



*Fruit in the middle of June that are usually gone by the end of April*



*Nigel culled about 3,000 feijoa trees to concentrate on just the best*

plant breeder, Roy Hart. After planting them, he set about recording every flower and every resulting fruit on all 600 trees, using spreadsheets to record that data and more recently using “boolean and algebra” to identify the best. It has shown him that some fruit take as little as 112 days from flowering to fruit drop, while others hang on for 178 days. He has recorded the production per square metre, the brix, pH (acidity/alkalinity), average fruit weight and appearance. The pH, by the way, suits his taste when it’s 4.4 or more. He also developed a five-point scoring system for taste that started from zero for horrible through to five for delicious.

“You can’t guess this stuff because it’s just too complicated. You have to measure them in all these factors and that tells you which are the best plants.”

He put them in the chiller for different periods of time up to 100 days and tasted them after they had been removed for seven days. Many didn’t last the 100 days or anywhere near that, and others didn’t last the seven days after they were removed. Or tasted disgusting. But he has found fruit that did last 100 days and tasted great after seven days, which gives him hope.

Varieties Waitui and Kawateri have come out of the breeding programme over the years for commercial growers when he was working with Roy Hart, plus Takaka and Waingaro for home gardeners. Since then, the diversity in his orchard has shown there’s so much more still to come – including a striped feijoa that has potential for its quirkiness and a fruit that tastes like pineapple. Tastes between trees vary greatly and he says they can even vary greatly on the one tree.

He has mostly Brazilian feijoa plant genetics which he refers to as “jungle genes” and with that comes huge variation and unpredictability.

“But very high productivity and some extraordinary flavours in them. Some of them have overwhelming complexities. And some of the flavours are terrible also.

“I look for oddball plants and keep those because they are the outliers and could be important in the future.”

After tasting thousands of feijoas over the years, he began to suspect there were pharmaceutical compounds in the fruit, and that led to work at Victoria University finding dozens of unidentified chemicals in them. Nigel says feijoas are loaded with fungicides and that’s being analysed further.

Despite marked improvements in feijoa breeding and huge potential, Nigel has become disenchanted with the industry. Propagation of feijoa is difficult commercially, picking the fruit during harvest is time consuming – though nets are improving that – and anyone can sell feijoas. That means people can pick feijoas from the ground for sale and customers will be disappointed. He had hoped there would be more large-scale growers taking the risk with feijoas, but they are still few and far between.

“

**...his orchard has shown there’s so much more still to come – including a striped feijoa that has potential for its quirkiness and a fruit that tastes like pineapple**

Meanwhile, something quite different has occurred in his orchard this year. The Unique variety is one of New Zealand’s earliest feijoa varieties to fruit and in his orchard its fruit is usually ready from the end of March and finished by the end of April. This year he has a 20-year-old tree that held fruit on the tree through to the middle of June. An Apollo tree has similarly held fruit through June.

“I think it is to do with temperature and rainfall and the plant is responding to its own genetic programme.”

In the past, Golden Bay has usually had beautiful weather through autumn before rain coming in around the end of April. Whereas Nigel says the weather has become unpredictable in recent years, plus milder, which seems to be having an effect on some plants. He also has a guava in the garden which was still loaded with green fruit in June. And he has never seen that before. ●

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# Making money from jam

*A group of Tasman school students are turning waste green kiwifruit into a jelly spread and the early signs are they might be onto a winner.*

By Anne Hardie

The four Year 13 Waimea College students chose sustainability for their business studies project and they decided to find a product that could use some of the region's waste fruit that was not up to export or local market standards.

After dabbling with different ideas, they tried fruit jelly with green kiwifruit and it worked. It worked so well that the result, Three Bays Jellies, won them the first regional challenge in the Young Enterprise Scheme and earned them \$100 to invest in their product.

“

**A low-sugar jelly was chosen over jam as they decided it better suited the boutique market**

They've had useful advice from The Food Factory which is the facility created by Pic Picot of Pic's Peanut Butter to help entrepreneurs create their own food business. They continue to meet with Pic's son, Louis, who along with other professionals has guided them on their business journey.

It's still at its fledgling stage, with one of the team members, Jared Peterson, turning kiwifruit into jelly in a pot at home. A low-sugar jelly was chosen over jam as they decided it better suited the boutique market, and they managed to retain the bright green colour of the kiwifruit through their recipe.



*The Three Bays Jellies team, from left, Nicole Byrman, Jared Peterson (rear), Sophie Calder and Sam McDonald*

They tried apples but they proved more difficult, and the green kiwifruit had a better texture and look in the jar, especially with the black pips through the bright green jelly.

Once they have enough product, they will aim at selling it at local markets and approach restaurants to see if some are interested in using the jelly.

Down the track, if their venture grows, they will have a business to sell. In the meantime, they have not only learnt about the amount of waste fruit in the region, but also the complexities of establishing a business and especially the food regulations associated with a food business.

“

**...there's nothing really wrong with the fruit apart from their shape or a bit of bruising, which doesn't matter a bit in jam**

Another team member, Sophie Calder, says there's nothing really wrong with the fruit apart from their shape or a bit of bruising, which doesn't matter a bit in jam. The project has been an eye opener for the group into the amount of fruit going to waste because it's not good enough to be sold to customers, especially now the region no longer has a juice factory to take it. ●





## AVO UPDATE



# Setting records

By Jen Scoular : Chief Executive, NZ Avocado



I very much enjoy the title light-heartedly given to me by Jamie Mackay at Newstalk ZBs Country radio show, of the most enthusiastic CEO in New Zealand. Talking avocados in the media can be a challenge – it's great for avocado visibility and we need to get our message across but we do want to be able to share the whole message. When a 15-minute conversation is cut into three half-sentence sound bites, the message in most cases gets very blurred. Bad news also seems to be most in demand, so when we have terrific news of a record season against so many odds, it is wonderful to be offered the opportunity to report exactly that – enthusiastically, positively and in full. Thanks Jamie for that!

Our news is that the avocado industry achieved record value in both the export and New Zealand markets in 2020-21. A total amount of \$227m was added to the New Zealand economy, giving growers a record return on their avocados. Volumes were up slightly, but this was a value story, with improved returns from most markets. We were fortunate to have strong demand from our largest export market Australia due to poor domestic production from Western Australia opening the door to over four million trays of New Zealand avocados. New Zealand avocados do compete with domestically grown Australian avocados, and previously New Zealand has exported up to three million trays a season. The additional volume going into the high demand Australian market improved returns, but also offered a much less challenging route than Asian markets. Freight, even to Australia, caused havoc for exporters, with delays in arrivals, departures,

last minute changes in route and delays in arrivals. Getting our avocados to Asia in prime condition was hugely problematic, worsened by the lack of airfreight, which exporters use constructively to ensure good consistent supply into each market.

The New Zealand market delivered another record, exceeding a value of \$60m. When I started in this industry ten years ago, the New Zealand market never returned over \$20m. A huge credit to the collaborative approach taken to grow consumer demand, educate and inform, and raise the visibility of the amazingly healthy and versatile fruit that is nurtured by our growers here in Aotearoa.

“

**...the avocado industry achieved record value in both the export and New Zealand markets in 2020-21**

Looking ahead, the good news is that for the fourth year in a row we have a similar volume, so we have avoided those terrible dips in productivity that have plagued the industry. The tough news is that freight is not improving, either sea freight or air freight, the Australian domestic production is huge, and Chilean avocados are now being imported by Australia. As an industry we will certainly need all the collective positivity we can muster to help get through the coming season. ●

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# TECHNICAL

THE LATEST INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

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Potential for  
tropical fruit

Pages 53-55







# Tropical fruit crops

*There is little doubt that global warming is going to result in the warmer areas of New Zealand being able to seriously consider the economics of producing some of the tropical fruits we occasionally import or enjoy when overseas.*

By Mike Nichols

There is already an increasing interest in the growing of banana (see Nichols, 2021), and this will result in more interest in other tropical fruits such as pineapple, mango, papaya, lychee and perhaps even such 'exotic' tropical fruits as rambutan, longan, mangosteen, and perhaps even durian. There are of course, sound biosecurity reasons for limiting the importation of exotic fruits (for example fruit fly).

Over the past 50 years there has been ongoing interest in the potential of growing tropical fruits in New Zealand. These have been directed at the selection of areas where the microclimate was more suitable. With



the development of relatively cheap plastic greenhouses, and the advent of global warming, the prospects of developing a tropical fruit industry for the domestic market are enhanced.

The downside is that to produce these crops effectively will require some form of protected cropping (greenhouses) and in some cases supplementary heating.

There is a looming shortage of electricity in New Zealand for the future, particularly as we move rapidly away from carbon dominated energy sources. With the bulk of the population in the North Island, and Manapouri sourced electricity for the foreseeable future committed to the

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*Mango being grown under cover in the Canary Islands*

aluminium smelter, there is an urgent need for more environmentally friendly electrical generation in the North Island. Of course, New Zealand has an advantage over many temperate countries, and that is access to geothermal energy.

“

**With the development of relatively cheap plastic greenhouses, and the advent of global warming, the prospects of developing a tropical fruit industry for the domestic market are enhanced**

The new development by Contact Energy of the Tauhara geothermal power project near Taupō, with its Geothermal Energy Park, may well provide this opportunity. However, heating does not have to be geothermally based, in fact in the Netherlands growers are looking at the possibility of sourcing heating from only a few hundred metres below the soil surface, as the temperature rises by about 2° to 3°C per 100 m in depth. This geothermal gradient is, however, not the same all over the world but can range from 1° to 5°C/100 m. This type of system can almost be regarded as a heat pump, with warm air in the summer being pumped underground during summer (to cool the greenhouse), and heat being extracted from the ground in the winter months.



### Pineapples

Currently, the majority of pineapples consumed in New Zealand are imported by sea from the Philippines, where they are grown by Dole in a massive plantation at

Polomolok. Because of this they must be harvested ahead of optimum maturity, and are a variety suited both for processing (canning) and for fresh market.

There are small areas of pineapples currently being grown in New Zealand, some in the field (where the microclimate allows), but essentially, I consider that pineapple production in New Zealand requires some form of protected cropping.

The main question then is whether using hydroponics might be a better approach than a soil-based system. Certainly, the advantages of hydroponics over soil for the majority of high value greenhouse crops is clear. Whether the New Zealand public is prepared to pay extra for a fresher product, harvested closer to maturity (and therefore hopefully sweeter) only time will tell.

What is certain is that pineapples crop best in warm temperatures, and that New Zealand is really not warm enough for good production unless we take advantage of modern technology.





*Mango on dwarf rootstock, Queensland*



### Papaya

Several years ago, there was some interest in the production of a papaya like fruit (called babaco) in New Zealand. It never really caught on, perhaps because it is inferior in taste (being less sweet) than the standard papaya.

There is some talk of the Cook Islands growing papaya for New Zealand, (Fotheringham, 2021) but (in my view) this has three major constraints, namely: the need to treat the fruit against fruit fly before it enters New Zealand, the airfreight costs, and the lack of modern horticultural knowledge in the Cook Islands.

Papaya can be grown from seed, which poses some problems in that plants can be either male or female or hermaphrodite, and it is only the hermaphrodite plants that are required. This means that the seedlings must be grown on until they flower, in order to select only the hermaphrodite plants.

Winter temperatures appear to be the important determinant of crop production and quality, and some heating during the winter may provide valuable economic advantages. Like most crops they are likely to perform better if grown hydroponically.



### Lychee, Longan & Rambutan

These all belong to the same plant family (Sapindaceae), and it appears from the literature that flower initiation requires a drought stress, followed by rains.

High tunnels (as rain shelters) will provide the opportunity to drought stress the trees – particularly if they are grown hydroponically in large pots rather than in the soil. Control of flowering should also provide a significant suppression of plant vigour, and thus enable trees to be grown in a dwarf manner.



### Durian

We are unlikely ever to see durian fruit imported into New Zealand. It has a disgusting smell yet a very pleasant taste and texture.

### Other tropical fruits?

There is a wide range of other tropical fruits which deserve to be grown in New Zealand. Many of them have already been tried, but with mixed success. With global warming and the additional protection afforded by relatively cheap plastic clad greenhouses, the potential is excellent. New Zealand's unique freedom from fruit fly might one day even open up a market for exporting tropical fruit to Japan! ●

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