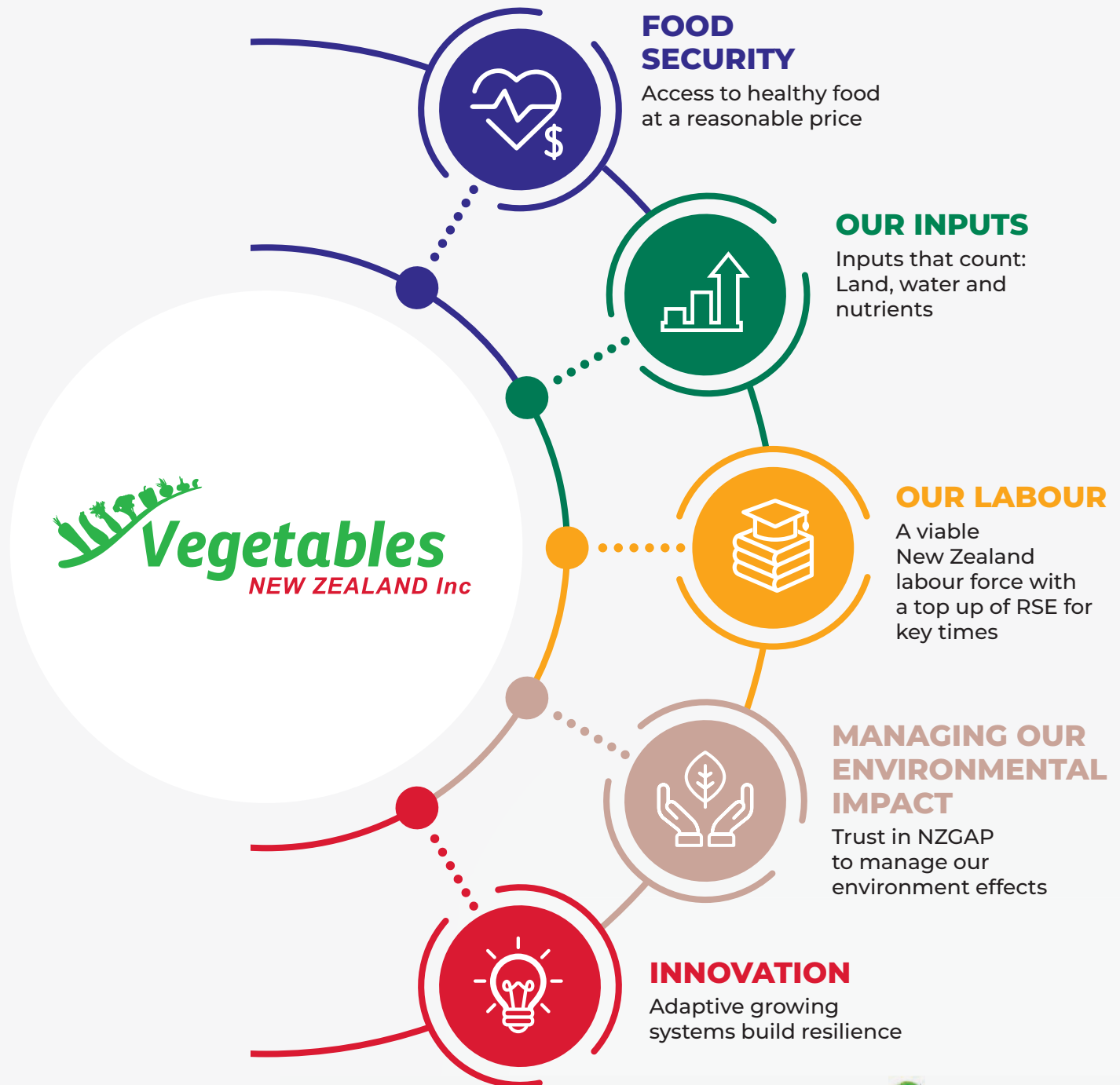


Vegetables New Zealand

MANIFESTO 2023





VEGETABLES NEW ZEALAND REPRESENTS...

55

Crops

90%

Domestic food supply

700

Growers

Growers in all regions of NZ, including covered crops.



THE VEGETABLE INDUSTRY...*

Employs

12,710

people in supply chain, **9,350** directly in vegetable production

Has revenue of

\$622m

\$466m in domestic value

Has production from

18,000ha

covering all **16 regions**

*Source: Workforce Development Plans for Fruit and Vegetables



1. FOOD SECURITY

New Zealanders need access to healthy food at a reasonable price.

- Vegetables are the most healthy horticultural crop grown in New Zealand. Greater vegetable consumption will improve the health outcomes for all Kiwis. It will also cost the Government less in health care.
- Vegetables need to be reasonably priced to promote consumption. Food banks are not the answer.
- Covid and Cyclone Gabrielle have shown that New Zealand needs a contingency plan to ensure we are able to feed our population (*National food supply strategy*).
- Food value is recognised as marketable yield not total production. Factors influencing marketable yield are nitrogen use, quality standards, market specifications, labour supply – changes to marketable yield will increase the cost of healthy food.



SOLUTION

A Minister of Horticulture is established to recognise the importance of healthy food and food security.

The new Natural and Built Environment Act (NBA) needs to recognise that domestic food production is as fundamental as water and shelter in its policy setting.



2. OUR INPUTS

We need access to key inputs like land, water and nutrients.

- A policy framework that allows:
 1. access to land for rotation and expansion of vegetable production to meet food demand.
 2. appropriate nutrient allocations to provide resilient food supply.
 3. appropriate water supply or storage for domestic food supply.



SOLUTION

A Government plan (*Fit For A Better World*) supports the action of – Right crop, Right place, Right time, Right inputs to maximise yield and lessen environment impact.

National Environment Standard – Commercial Vegetable Production (NES-CVP) ensures access to water, land, and the optimal inputs (nutrient + agchemicals + genetics) required to grow healthy vegetables in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.



3. OUR LABOUR

Vegetable production needs a viable New Zealand labour force with a top up of Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme workers for key harvest times.

- Vegetable production has variable harvest periods over a year. It is different to a fruit harvest. Vegetable harvest is not planned 18 months in advance and requires labour flexibility.
- A limited labour supply will influence domestic food supply and the price of vegetables.
- Skilled staff (not RSE) need a pathway to residency.
- Horticulture is on the green list for recognised skills. To work in the vegetable industry requires a universal / adaptive skillset.
- AnSCO codes are outdated.
- Integrated horticulture regional programmes have a high status and connect to community employment programmes.



SOLUTION

Access to the RSE scheme is important, giving vegetable production flexibility within its labour force.

Workforce development plans link to immigration, training and education.

Domestic food supply should be a criteria for growers to access RSE scheme allocations.



4. MANAGING OUR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We need to trust in New Zealand Good Agricultural Practice (NZGAP) to manage our environment effects.

- NZGAP delivers outcomes for environment standards and emissions.
- Vegetable emissions for fresh water (nitrogen leaching) are known with Sustainable Vegetable Systems research.
- NZGAP verifies all horticulture practices and emission levels (environmental effects).
- NZGAP provides a framework for building good social practice on farms.



SOLUTION

NZGAP is recognised and trusted in Government policy to manage vegetable environmental and social impacts.



5. INNOVATION

We need adaptive growing systems to build resilience and meet climate change obligations and consumer expectations for growing food.

- Recognise covered and protected cropping as an adaptive system to meet climate change (use CO₂ in production of food).
- Fast track (case study) advanced technology in protected cropping systems before transition to outdoor cropping.
- Genetic adaptive crops need to be recognised as part of a climate change solution.
- Use technology to engage growers in more sustainable systems and future proof our farms.
- Covered crops process heat have decarbonisation plans by 2025, and have reduce their CO₂ emissions.



SOLUTION

National Environment Standard for Commercial Vegetable Production (NES-CVP) delivers viable farm practices to ensure sustainability, resilience and continual improvement.

Vegetable industry is limiting their emissions for carbon to be in-line with international best practice and need Government support to fast track energy transition plans to reduce further emissions.

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