

Trevelyan's Newsletter

Trevelyan's
Growing a better future

Overview »



James Trevelyan
Managing Director

Returning more money from our supply chain to the grower

In the last four years (including 2025), annual offshore quality costs in the kiwifruit industry have fluctuated sharply between \$176 million and \$539 million. There's a growing recognition that profitability can no longer be separated from accountability, and one of the clearest paths to protecting grower returns is by strengthening responsibility along the supply chain.

Right now, suppliers are only absorbing approximately 10% of the quality costs that show up in the market. The rest is left for the wider pool of growers to wear. All attributes for a grower to set and harvest a crop are production/financially driven, however, the discussion is shifting. Zespri is undertaking a Quality Strategy review, and I assume the objective is to ensure that those who control fruit quality are more directly responsible for its outcome.

And that's where the opportunity lies.

By making every step of the supply chain accountable for fruit quality—the grower, the harvesting crew, the transport, the postharvest facilities, the shipping, and the marketer—we can identify and address the root causes of waste. This isn't about punishment. It's about creating the right incentives to reduce waste, protect fruit quality, reduce rejections, and ultimately ensure more money flows back to the grower.

Quality challenges like juice staining (NPFG), soft patches, rots, physical damage and overripes can't be solved in the market; they must be addressed at their origin.

The core principle is simple: You can't pass your waste down the line.

If we have greater accountability and responsibility at each step, the industry stands to improve fruit quality. If this process is clear, so is the solution, and the savings, and then we can return more value to those doing it right.

Operations »



John Lewitt
Head of Operations &
Logistics

G4 Asia markets trip

I'm at Shanghai Airport, heading to Shenzhen. I've already checked in at one of the self-service kiosks and am now at the bag drop area. I reach for my passport and boarding pass, but before I can scan anything, I'm told, "No need—just look at the camera." I glance up, and almost instantly, the screen displays my name and seat number. A message appears: Place your bag on the conveyor. No documents or bag tag scanned. Just facial recognition. That's it.

I head towards the entrance of the security check area. Once again, I keep my passport and boarding pass in my pocket. The camera recognises me, the gate opens, and I walk through without stopping.

Inside the terminal, I step into a convenience store. There are dozens of cameras on the ceiling, watching every move. I swipe my credit card at the entrance, pick up the items I want, and simply walk out. No checkout, no scanning, no human interaction. The cameras track exactly what I've taken, and my card is charged automatically as I exit.

In the departure lounge, the boarding call comes. Again, I reach for my boarding pass, and again I'm told, "No need, just look at the camera." The screen flashes my name and seat number, and the gate opens. I board the plane, still without showing a single document.

That night, in my Shenzhen hotel room, I realise I've forgotten my phone charger. It's 4 a.m., but I call reception anyway. A staff member answers, asks for my phone model, then hangs up. A few minutes later, the room phone rings—silence on the line. Curious, I open the door. Waiting outside is a robot. It's come all the way from reception, taken the lift, navigated the corridors, and found my room. On its front is a compartment labelled open. Inside: a brand-new charging cable.

Now I'm left wondering—do I tip the robot? Offer it a cup of tea? —Too late. It's already rolling back to the elevator.

Back in Shanghai, I'm in a meeting room at the Good Farmer Head Office. They claim that online order companies in China deliver orders, including kiwifruit, within 30 minutes. I'm sceptical. In a city of 30 million people where traffic can make a short trip take an hour, how is that even possible?

They ask if I'd like a bubble tea—from a café, somewhere in the city. I agree, mostly to test their claim. The order is placed at exactly 3:50 p.m., and we carry on with our meeting. At 4:05 p.m.—just 15 minutes later—there's a knock at the door, and a young woman walks in carrying two freshly made bubble teas from said café.

Later, on the road somewhere outside Shanghai, we make a quick stop at a takeaway restaurant. Our host offers to buy lunch, and we tell her our orders. She enters them into the self-service kiosk and simply looks at the camera to pay. It recognises her and links to her Alipay account. Payment done—without touching her wallet or phone.

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Now in Taiwan, we head out for lunch at a large, famous dumpling restaurant. At the entrance, we're greeted with a smile and told, "Oona will show you to your table." Oona is a bright yellow robot with her name printed on both sides. She leads us through a winding maze of tables and people, pausing politely to let customers pass. Eventually, she stops at Table 101—our lunch spot.

This is where the world is going—and it's moving fast. We have visited China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan during this 2-week trip; collectively, these four markets receive over 90 million trays of Zespri kiwifruit annually. I suspect if we want to maintain a successful kiwifruit industry, we have no real choice but to embrace change and keep up.



Kiwifruit »



Mike Perrett
Head of Kiwifruit Grower
Services

Corporate farming in New Zealand - the trend

There has been an increasing presence of corporate farming in NZ. This model refers to farm businesses that are managed by New Zealand-owned companies, but are owned and financed by companies, trusts or investment entities, both domestic and foreign.

Corporate farms operate large units in dairy, beef, sheep, forestry, and horticulture, and have now become a vital part of the New Zealand economy, especially in the export sector. Generally, they are often leaders in utilising advanced technology to enhance efficiency and productivity, coupled with high standards of sustainability, food safety, and staff health and safety.

I have used the following definition of a corporate kiwifruit orchard:

- Greater than 100 hectares under their direct/ultimate control.
- Multiple shareholders and multiple orchard locations.
- Financial reporting obligations to their respective shareholders.

Within Trevelyan's client portfolio, we have seen the volume of corporate orchards supplying fruit increase from 539,000 TE's in 2020 to 3.1 million in 2025. As a percentage of the overall Trevelyan's supply, it has increased from 4% of total volume in 2020 to 15% in 2025.

I expect corporate farming in horticulture will continue to grow. The model has good access to capital, backed by strong industry growth and positive market demand, and will continue to move at pace with developments. Wider behaviours are also changing; social aspects of ageing orchard ownership, reduced interest in succession planning, and/or the movement of capital to other interests, will likely see the amalgamation of orchard properties, creating a fertile ground for corporate investment.

The increasing presence of the corporate model will continue to change the face of farm/orchard ownership in New Zealand, and attributes of culture, governance, production drivers, machinery, equipment, growth, succession, and capital needs will be vastly different from those of a traditional family operation.

The challenge and opportunity for Trevelyan's is to provide the appropriate service for its diverse range of growers to meet an ever-changing landscape.

Avocado »



Dan Birnie
Head of Avocado

Horticulture can be cruel

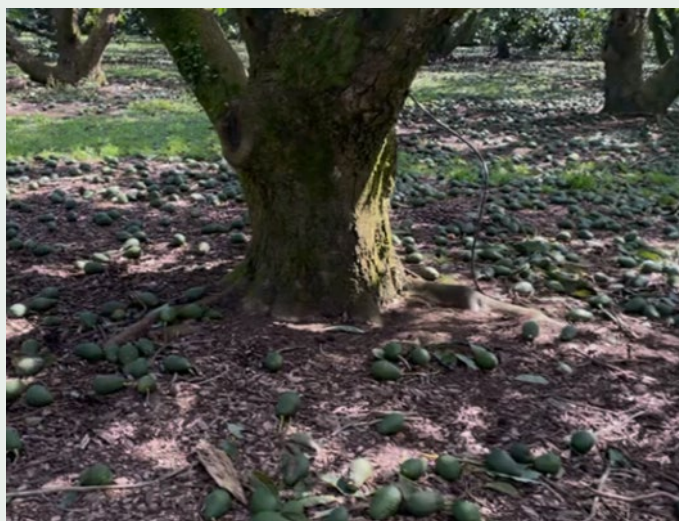
Just this week I chatted with one of our kiwifruit growers, and he said every time he picks a crop and sends it to the shed, he breathes a sigh of relief and is thankful that he managed to get it harvested.

A number of our Katikati avocado growers were not so fortunate following the windstorms that occurred in mid-September. Many were on the cusp of harvest, and now, this singular wind event has severely impacted their crop.

Anne and I have spent time with many of those growers since the wind event, and recently, Steve Butler (our General Manager) joined us for the day. To give you an idea of the severity, here are some of the impacts that our growers shared with us.

Wilson and Barbara McGillivray's orchard had fruit harvested both before and after the wind, providing a stark example to gauge the impact on fruit quality. The Class 1 packout decreased from 85% to around 65%, and lenticel damage went from 3% of rejects to 50%.

Eddie and Carol Biesiek, along with Laura Young's orchard, has been one of the worst affected, with an estimated 140 bins of crop reduced to 40 bins. When we visited, Eddie was on a tractor, in the rain, with a team of RSE workers, picking up the fruit for the NZ Food Network, a charity that distributes food to where it is needed most.



Sometimes good can come out of adversity. Thanks to Eddie and Carol, as well as NZ Avocado and the Rural Support Trust, who have also been proactive in bringing growers together to offer support, advice and connections.

Organic »



Bex Astwood
Organic Category
Manager

Organic update

We are already halfway through sales for both SunGold Organic (GAOB) and Hayward Organic (HWOB). The Zespri Organic Town Hall meeting was held on September 11 and provided an update on how the markets are performing. For those who missed it, you can access the recording [here](#).

Tracey Armstrong, the Zespri Product Manager Organics, provided an interesting market update, which I have summarised below:

- Worldwide, growth in the organic category was stagnant over 2022 and 2023, most likely due to the cost of living. The category had good uplift in 2024, with a 6.8% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)—higher than conventional fruit.
- The majority of Zespri Organics is sold in the U.S.A., EU, and Japan, with the fastest growth in the U.S.A. and EU. The percentage of Zespri Organic trays sold to each market are:
 - HWOB: 23% US, 44% EU, 29% Japan
 - GAOB: 32% US, 31% EU, 28% Japan
- The volume of HWOB remained the same at 3.6 million trays for both 2024 and 2025, with the average price per tray increasing from \$20 to \$23. GAOB increased from 3.6 million trays in 2024 to 4.7 million trays in 2025. This resulted in the U.S.A. and Europe increasing their volume by over 400,000 trays each, however, despite this increase in volume, the average price per tray increased from \$28 to \$31.
- Interestingly, the U.S.A. is now the highest paying market, overtaking Japan. Between 2024 and 2025, the U.S.A. increased their volume of trays by 18% for HWOB and 50% for GAOB.

Sam Buchanan, the Zespri Supply Planner for Organics, also provided an update regarding demand for high-paying markets:

- For GAOB, the sector did not meet demand for Japan, Taiwan or Korea; four out of six suppliers could not pack their allocated share for these countries. At the completion of packing, the industry was 160,000 trays short of demand for these markets.
- For HWOB, three out of six suppliers could not pack their allocated share for Japan, Taiwan and Korea. At the completion of packing, the industry was 60,000 trays short for Japan.
- With the U.S.A. being a high-paying, high-growth market, it is important to be mindful of the U.S.A./CAN market restrictions applied to your BioGro certificate for tanalised posts.

The Japan/Taiwan loadout premium has now been operating for four years and will continue for the 2026 season. This premium is paid to postharvest on organic shipments to Japan (JS and UN labelled pallets only) and Taiwan (JS labelled pallets only). The payment is passed to growers on all trays that meet the taste and pest requirements for fruit shipped to Japan or Taiwan.

At Trevelyan's, based on the August 2025 OGR, the maximum payment per tray was \$0.23 for GAOB and \$0.15 for HWOB. Meeting these requirements is a great way to increase your OGR!

Technical »



Gordon Skipage
Head of Technical

Can we adapt to climate for a competitive edge?

As I sat in a recent governance workshop with TGL directors, I reflected on what was presented as one of the top five issues directors face - “how to turn climate into a competitive edge”. With my team’s role in science, trials and extension, I found it interesting that the challenge of climate needed to resonate as much with directors as with my team. While I’ve always considered the work the Technical Team does to be around improving orchard/industry resilience and profitability, my focus has sharpened on how we create a competitive edge across our respective industries.

The challenge is substantial - we face a world of increasing regulatory, customer and consumer requirements, overlaid with increasing climate challenges, not to mention rapidly changing dynamics of the kiwifruit and avocado industries. If left unchecked, such dynamics can easily lead to poorer quality products - a result of worsening growing/industry practices in the face of high debt loading, increased costs and poorer returns.

In biology, Chaos Theory explains how a small initial change leads to vastly different outcomes over time (think “the butterfly effect”). By front-footing some of these challenges now, we hope small changes will lead to significant impacts in the years to come. The Trevelyan’s Technical Team have been quietly taking these early steps - investigating how we can support growers to improve their orchards’ physical and financial resilience. Recent successes include:

- Under Pranoy Pal’s guidance, Trevelyan’s won the 2025 Horticulture New Zealand Sustainable Innovation Award for his work in using regenerative practices and biochar in kiwifruit orchards. In an industry first, Pranoy’s trial has shown that such practices can improve soil retention and quality, along with attracting and maintaining beneficial insects in the orchard.
- Jonathan Cutting recently held an avocado workshop (in conjunction with Plant and Food Research and New Zealand Avocado) about using beneficial, predator insects to reduce the need for pesticide spraying on orchards. While this approach to crop protection in avocados is still in its infancy, growers shared their experience of effective pest control using beneficial insects in commercial orcharding operations.

It’s important to note that this work has piqued interest from other growers and sectors (i.e. the butterfly effect in action), as others recognise “we have to do it differently going forward”. We’ve had many groups reach out, including one interested in plant-to-plant communication and wanting to examine how airborne chemical compounds (volatiles) released from companion or native plants might influence kiwifruit vine resistance to herbivores or enhance attraction to beneficial insects.

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In other words, can we reduce pest pressure in the orchard by tweaking cover crop species/improving soil health, thereby reducing the need to spray?

So why is this important? Put simply:

1. Our spray options are decreasing
2. Our social license to spray is under scrutiny
3. Many of our historical on-orchard practices are actually detrimental (and counterproductive) to growing high quality fruit in the long run
4. Many regenerative practices are backed by logic and strong science
5. You don't need to do everything; start with something

While many of these practices are uncomfortable because they challenge “the norm”, to thrive we need to continue to explore their uses, and where sensible, look to adopt. I'm not suggesting growers should adopt all “new” principles, but adding a little Chaos Theory to our daily orcharding lives by making small changes will allow for significant changes tomorrow – all while ensuring a competitive edge and profitability in the face of a changing climate.

More details on the regenerative work on kiwifruit that Pranoy has been doing can be found on The Lighter Touch website [here](#).

Sustainability »



Sarah Lei
Head of Sustainability

Partnering to achieve greater sustainability impact

When we began our sustainability journey in 2010, we looked around our site to see what Trevelyan's could do to help make the world a better place. This introspective approach led us to many less than salubrious activities such as "dumpster diving" to learn more about the waste we send to landfill. The goal was to understand our impacts on the environment and identify actions we could take internally to make a meaningful difference.



Dumpster diving in 2011

These early efforts were enlightening, and we quickly realised how much work we had ahead of us, but there were plenty of quick wins to be had by diverting compostable and recyclable waste out of landfill. In 2014, we produced our first annual Sustainability Report using the GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) Framework, which was entitled "Our Story So Far". Over the last decade, we have kept up our sustainability efforts and continued our annual reporting.

Over the last few years, we have discovered that we can have a much greater impact by partnering with others, including our internal team, growers, community, industry and the wider horticulture sector. Building partnerships helps:

- create positive connections and develop meaningful relationships,
- increase the awareness of and effort toward addressing specific social and environmental needs,
- share and leverage ideas and solutions, and
- create a collaborative environment that achieves greater progress and enduring, mutually beneficial solutions.

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There's a list of initiatives that didn't quite turn out as planned, but there's plenty to celebrate, including the following non-exhaustive list:

- Partnering with health providers to enhance support services for our internal team and ultimately improving well-being.
- Working with Powerco and the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) to co-fund an energy strategy report, prepared by Deta.
- Joining an industry project to support the transition away from high GWP (Global Warming Potential) refrigerants.
- Participation in the industry Carbon Neutral Trial for orchards and postharvest.
- Donating over 30m³ of compost to Te Puke High School for the Seed to Plate Programme.
- Partnering with one of our growers to send reject fruit to school children in the Chatham Islands and donating reject fruit to the NZ Food Network.
- Supplying fruit bins to be used as a stage at the Te Puke Matariki Festival, Te Puke High School Ball and School Production.
- Employing Summer Intern Students and using a recent university graduate to prepare our Sustainability Report.
- Loaning hi-vis vests to be used by volunteers at the Mount Pickleball Classic and the Te Puke Clean-up.
- Inviting our suppliers and local Bay of Plenty sustainability managers to visit and see our waste minimisation initiatives.
- Providing education for our internal team and the wider community during Recycling Week, including a session about how we manage and measure our waste.
- Having several of our internal team attend an XLabs session in Tauranga, facilitated by Circularity, on how to create a circular economy for waste.
- Hosting tours on our site to build and strengthen professional relationships, share knowledge and increase collaboration.

Building strong relationships has been key in supporting Trevelyan's success over the last fifty years. We work hard to develop trusted connections and partner with others who align with our values to help create a greater sustainable impact.

If you have an idea that you think we could help support or that could help support some of the work we do, please get in touch sarah.lei@trevelyan.co.nz or apply via our [website](#)

The logo consists of the letters 'TGL' in a white, sans-serif font, followed by two white chevrons pointing to the right. The logo is set against a dark green, rounded rectangular background.

TGL »



Colin Olesen
TGL Chair

Your feedback to your TGL Grower Directors is needed now please

It was good to engage with growers at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the end of August.

The Grower Director elections resulted in Jeff Roderick and Steve Wright being re-elected and Jared Lee being elected as our newest Grower Director. Heather Hawkey will shortly be taking six months' maternity leave from the TGL Board, and the Directors have co-opted our existing Associate Director, Courtney Bragg, as a full TGL Grower Director for that same six-month period. At the first Director's meeting after the AGM, I was re-elected as Chair and Simon Cook re-elected as Deputy Chair

Recently, the TGL Directors attended a 'Applied Taste of Governance Workshop' to enhance their Governance skills. The workshop identified areas requiring review, adjustment, or improvement that the Board will address in the coming months.

The major issue facing your TGL Board, as well as growers and the whole kiwifruit industry, is how to prioritise fruit quality over fruit volume in the future. If fruit quality is not at the top of the priority list, then the Zespri brand and the price premium that our brand commands in the market will be quickly eroded. That is a one-way street that is all downhill. Your Directors are considering all options to ensure Trevelyan's pack the best quality fruit possible, while balancing this goal with volume objectives. They are well aware of the need for volume in the competitive packhouse environment.

So, what is on the Board table for discussion?

Audits that ensure compliance with best practice, penalties for bad fruit (i.e., reject rates and explosives charges), along with eligibility to participate in our pools, including expanding the pool options to choose from. By eligibility, I mean: should we consider that certain pools are only open to growers who meet agreed standards of fruit presentation and storage ability? This is an extremely important discussion that will be had over the next two months. I suggest it is so important in fact, that each Trevelyan's grower should contact a TGL Grower Director to let them know what they consider is fair and reasonable. Your Directors want to, and need to, hear your opinions so that they are reflected in our final decisions. Please see the contact details for the TGL Directors below.

Lastly, some good news regarding onshore fruit storage. Currently, we see excellent results for Trevelyan Growers, and while I know there is still a way to go before the full season results are in, we can clearly observe that Donna and her team are again doing an excellent job of progressing fruit loadout to maximise grower returns.

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The below table shares all the contact information of the Trevelyan' Growers Limited Board.

Name	Role	Email	Phone
Colin Olesen	Chair	colin@olesen.co.nz	021 967 520
Simon Cook	Deputy Chair	simon@rosl.co.nz	027 572 6387
Steve Wright	Grower Director	sawright039@gmail.com	027 291 5305
Jeff Roderick	Grower Director	roderick1@xtra.co.nz	027 290 7619
Mat Johnston	Grower Director	mat@mjc.kiwi	027 277 7371
Kyle Howie	Grower Director	kylehowie@outlook.co.nz	021 332 379
Murray Cresswell	Grower Director	murray@cresswells.net.nz	029 464 7799
Heather Hawkey	Grower Director	h.hawkey@outlook.com	027 426 0190
Jared Lee	Grower Director	leeorchardslimited@gmail.com	022 476 8044
Steve Butler	Trevelyan Director	stephenb@trevelyan.co.nz	027 517 7999
James Trevelyan	Trevelyan Director	james@trevelyan.co.nz	027 648 8878
Ian Coventry	Trevelyan Director	ian.coventry@trevelyan.co.nz	021 505 708

The logo consists of the letters 'TAGL' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by two white chevron symbols '»'. The logo is positioned on a dark green, rounded rectangular background.

Ashby Whitehead
TAGL Chair

Quarterly TAGL update

In this article, I would like to update all the Trevelyan's avocado growers on the recent change to the Trevelyan's Avocado Growers Limited (TAGL) Board.

We are pleased to welcome two new directors to the TAGL Board: Tim Spencer from Katikati and Graeme Haswell from the Waikato. We look forward to working alongside them and benefiting from their experience and insight.

Ron Bailey has stepped down, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for his dedicated service to the TAGL Board. Throughout his tenure, Ron has been a true advocate for fruit quality across all markets. His extensive knowledge of avocado growing and his leadership have had a far-reaching impact, not just within TAGL but also as the Chair of NZ Avocado and a key figure in the formation of BayFarms, leaving an indelible mark on the industry.

Lastly, we are deeply aware of the significant impact of the recent weather event on orchards across the region. Our thoughts go out to those growers who are facing losses. We encourage everyone to reach out to their neighbours and stay connected during this challenging time.

— Ashby

General »



Packhouse 1 sizer replacement

Following the sizer upgrade at Packhouse 2 earlier in the year, we're relocating the more modern and efficient original sizer from Packhouse 2 to Packhouse 1.

Beyond relocation, the project involves removing and reinstating every nut and bolt to modify the original left-hand fruit delivery system to suit the right-hand delivery needed for the operational layout of Packhouse 1.

After weeks of preparation, the team reached a major milestone in September, with the installation of the sizer chains and cups. With power running to the motor, our engineering team were able to successfully turn the machine over for the first time — a huge moment for the team who've worked so hard to get us here.

The next milestone is the electronics: wiring the sizer, setting up the weighbridge, and timing all 162 solenoids so the machine can do what it's designed for — sorting fruit with speed and accuracy.



Every step takes us closer to a fully operational packhouse, and our readiness for the 2026 harvest season.

We'll keep you updated as Packhouse 1 continues to take shape- follow us on our social channels to learn more.