

Trevelyan's Newsletter

Trevelyan's
Growing a better future

Overview »



James Trevelyan
Managing Director

Nothing to see here



When I was a young lad staring out the window wondering which direction to take, my father said, “Son, be careful, the closer you get to the soil, the worse the pay is”. This was in a time pre-Zespri, when you were promised the world only to receive a lesson in reality and the commercial activities of marketing.

Now, under the umbrella of Zespri, life close to the soil is a fine place to be. Money is squeezed out of the supermarket till, drops through the Zespri framework and ends up in the grower’s back pocket via postharvest. The postharvest world competes hard with each other, ensuring packing margins are tight, thereby assuring that the lion’s share of the funds flow to the growers.

When you get entities competing against each other, you always need a police car on the road. In our case, that is the Zespri auditing structure. It is this structure that maintains order in our industry, and without order, I sense we would head back to the days my father referred to.

This season, accusations were directed at different postharvest providers for putting underweight fruit in trays, using low dry matter fruit for repack donors and packing out-of-grade fruit for commercial gain. Zespri has assured the industry that they have found no evidence of these activities, both onshore and offshore, which is pleasing to hear.

The fruit on New Zealand supermarket shelves has caught my eye, however. The photo above was taken at Papanui Pak’nSave in Christchurch a couple of weeks ago. Under the Zespri quality standards, this fruit cannot be sold; however, someone has packed this fruit into a Zespri box with a Class 2 label and sold it via the back door of the supermarket. Should I be worried about the values of those that are making money from these activities?

Some days our values cost us money, but if we don’t uphold them, we will end up back where we started - in the pre-Zespri days that my father warned me about.

Operations »



Donna Bennett
Inventory & Shipping
Manager

Operations update

With John on Leave, I'll provide this quarter's update.

Export packing for the 2025 season concluded on June 16, marking a later finish compared to June 6 in 2024. We've now transitioned to packing Controlled Atmosphere (CA) rooms, with a goal to complete all 12 rooms by the end of July. This year, we utilised full capacity, placing 8,818 bins into CA.

Upon completion of CA packing, we will have packed a total of 20.03 million tray equivalents, up from 19.51 million in 2024. Here's a breakdown by variety and grow method:

| Variety/Grow Method | 2025 (t/e) | 2024 (t/e) |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| GA1CK | 12,217,327 | 11,827,189 |
| GA1OB | 1,661,538 | 1,610,000 |
| HW1CK | 5,470,614 | 5,462,739 |
| HW1OB | 445,605 | 471,884 |
| HE1CK | 20,291 | 21,696 |
| RS1CK | 213,519 | 120,115 |
| Total Packed | 20,028,894 | 19,513,583 |

This season, short stalks in the SunGold variety have led to increased physical damage throughout the supply chain. We also observed a higher rate of explosive fruit per bin in both SunGold and Hayward varieties during the 2025 season compared to 2024. However, these levels remain lower than those recorded in 2022 and 2023. We're now seeing these higher explosive levels manifest as Non-Pathogenic Fungal Growth (NPF) during the storage phase.

Staffing remained strong throughout the season, with full shifts maintained consistently, mirroring the stability seen in 2024.

Looking ahead, our focus shifts to the shipping season. To date, we've shipped approximately 40% of Hayward and 60% of SunGold inventory. According to the current Zespri departure plan, the final shipment is expected in early November. The coming months will be busy for our Condition Checking, Repacking, Order Preparation, and Loadouts teams.



Kiwifruit »



Mike Perrett
Head of Kiwifruit Grower
Services

Inter-generational orcharding and ownership

My last article was focused on ageism and the generational split of the Trevelyan's grower base. With 45%+ of Trevelyan's growers being of the silent or baby boomer generations, the question of "keeping the orchard in the family" no doubt will have been a topic discussed around the dining room table on many occasions. Is there a desire by future generations to hold, maintain and grow the family assets? If so, is there a structured succession plan, and how is equity and equality managed to ensure all beneficiaries are treated in a fair manner?

I wanted to discuss this topic with grower families and share their thoughts. To respect the families' privacy, I have changed the names and businesses to fictitious identities, but the themes and processes discussed are real.

Family No. 1 – Gold Kiwifruit Orchard

Ownership of the land – second and third generations. Still actively farming, this family has owned the land since the 1970s and developed a kiwifruit orchard over that time.

The current structure involves the siblings (third generation) holding a share in the orchard in the form of a company. The third generation does not physically manage the orchard but takes an active part in the decision-making process. The company structure allows the family to share the wealth creation and essentially have access to that equity to build on the investments, whether that be on or off the farm. The company structure is relatively informal in terms of meetings and strategies, relying in part on the goodwill and tightness of the family structure. The group recognises that with the inclusion of partners, marriages etc., the company form may require adjustment.

Although there is a long family history to the property, the emotional tie to the land would be secondary to the commercial performance, and the transfer of capital value to a different set of assets and/or investments due to a change in circumstances or shareholders' investment decisions/strategies, is not viewed as a negative.

The second-generation parents have set up their investment portfolio to have limited exposure to the company and a degree of financial independence. This protects them from any negative performance issues relating to the company's investment decisions or economic performance. The family have recently engaged a professional facilitator to discuss their current structure and review potential options going forward, including their current business strategy.

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Family No. 2 – Gold and Green Kiwifruit Orchard

Ownership of the land – currently second generation. Actively farmed since 1959, with some second-generation siblings currently farming.

The plan is to establish a structure where the orchard land is allocated through separate titles to the third generation. The orchard business can be farmed and managed as one, but this arrangement has the ability for capital/equity to be extracted by one or more parties if their life aspirations are not centered around orchard ownership, e.g., a house in Auckland or living overseas. The overarching family entity has the ability to lend/provide capital to some of the family members who would not be based on the farm if there were unity and agreement for that to occur.

As in Family No. 1, the second-generation parents have positioned themselves so that they are not dependent on or exposed to the decision-making or investment options of the third generation, and where extracting and moving capital is a possibility. The ultimate goal is to transfer the wealth generated in an equitable manner, but also to have children living close by – a nice to have, but not fundamental to the structure.

Family No. 3 – Gold Kiwifruit Orchard

Ownership of the Land – the first generation continues to own the land and are retired. Two of the second-generation siblings manage the orchard and complete all maintenance, development, machinery work and some young vine training. All other vine work is contracted out, as the siblings have full-time jobs.

The siblings are paid a monthly retainer as a reflection of their input, and do not share directly in the annual profits. There is currently no record of time spent on the orchard, and no compensation differences based on varying inputs. There is a degree of emotional sentiment to the farm held by the first generation, as they have worked hard and gone without to ensure of its success. The challenge is how to hold and grow the family investment for the longer term but maintain fairness and equity for the respective family members.

A successful succession plan requires the right structure, whether that be a company or trust. The main objectives are to:

1. Achieve financial and emotional security for the parents.
2. Succession by interested family members has a flexible and resilient plan for the long term.
3. The non-farming family members are treated fairly.

If you're interested in more ideas around this topic, I recommend reading 'Keeping Farming in the Family' by Ian Blackman.



Avocado »

Dan Birnie
Head of Avocado

Avocado grower survey

In April, we engaged Ange Wallace and her team from [What Lies Beneath](#) (WLB) to carry out a qualitative study with a portion of our Trevelyan's growers.

As part of this study, they conducted over-the-phone interviews with 15 of our avocado growers to hear what we are doing well, what we need to work on and to help us gain deeper insights into what our growers are experiencing and how we can best support them. WLB then presented the full manuscripts of the interviews to key team members involved with our avocado business line, and we held two workshops as a team to discuss the feedback.

Some of the key themes we saw were:

- Growers really value the strength of the relationships they've made with Trevelyan's team members.
- Our open-door, open-line vibe sets us apart from other businesses, and growers feel connected and supported by our team.
- Growers really value our weekly email communications, phone calls and orchard visits, and some said they'd like to verbally hear from us and see us a little more,
- the low-hectare 'passive income' dream is challenging. It's high effort with low reward at this time, which is both stressful and frustrating.

Overall, the survey was positive. We are continuing to review the feedback and will then integrate key points into what we call 'the A3 process' here at Trevelyan's, which is where we set goals for the business.

One of our significant challenges is how to maintain our level of service, and the feeling of connectedness with growers, while keeping our packing charges as low as possible.

In the meantime, I would like to thank our growers who gave their time to participate in the survey and candidly shared their observations. The insights we have gained will help us support all growers better and further strengthen the partnership between growers and Trevelyan's.

Organics »



Mike Perrett
Head of Kiwifruit Grower
Services

2025 organic sector market report

With Bex away on maternity leave, I have (at Bex's suggestion) summarised some key points from the recent [2025 Aotearoa New Zealand Organic Sector Market Report](#).

As an introduction, what is organic agriculture?

Organic agriculture, as defined by IFOAM Organics International and subscribed to by Organics Aotearoa New Zealand (OANZ), is founded on four principles:

1. The Principle of Health – organic agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal and human as one and indivisible.
2. The Principle of Ecology – organic agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them, and help sustain them.
3. The Principle of Fairness – organic agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities.
4. The Principle of Care – organic agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

Some 'lay of the land' statistics from the report:

51% of New Zealand's organic output is exported, of which fruit and vegetables make up 40.3%, dairy 35.3% and wine 12.2%.

New Zealand's organic exports are anchored by strong performance in a few key markets. By value of all organic exports, our top five markets are: the United States (28.5%), the European Union (18.4%), Australia (18.2%), China (10.4%) and Japan (7.0%).

Organics is growing rapidly internationally, with demand being driven by a desire for traceable, safe and ethical food. As of 2024, the global organic food and beverage market was valued at around USD\$280 billion, growing at an annual rate of between 11 to 14%. The forecast value by 2033 is USD\$650 billion.

The growth of the organic sector in New Zealand has been driven mainly by the dairy and kiwifruit segments. Cooperative and single-channel marketing organisations, such as Fonterra and Zespri, have proven instrumental in supporting producers through the process of organic certification and increasing the levels of production across New Zealand.

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Key growth statistics of the New Zealand organic sector (comparing 2020 to 2024) are as follows:

- The sector has grown from NZ\$723 million in 2020 to NZ\$1.18 billion in 2024.
- Domestic consumption reached NZ\$572 million, including NZ\$190 million from the food service sector.
- Certified Organic Land grew 4.3%, reaching 89,544 hectares.

Key challenges for the New Zealand organic sector include the following:

- Only 0.6% of New Zealand's total agricultural land is certified organic, which is behind global benchmarks.
 - In 22 countries, land under organic agriculture makes up 10% or more of total agricultural land, with Liechtenstein recording the highest percentage at 45%, followed by Austria at 27% and Uruguay at 25%.
 - Across the globe, the percentage of total agricultural land under organic production was 2.1%. Interestingly, Australia is home to the largest area of organic land (including land undergoing conversion to organic production) at 53 million hectares in 2023. This figure represents more than 50% of the total global area of close to 99 million hectares.
- The National Organic Standard remains unfinished, meaning producers face uncertainty and inconsistent recognition in international markets.
- Organic equivalency agreements with key trading partners, such as the European Union and the United States, are not in place.
- Certification and regulatory costs are rising.
- The government's proposed Gene Technology bill, which would allow the release of GMOs – Genetically Modified Organisms, is viewed as a threat to existing organic producers and jeopardises New Zealand's GE-free status.

Technical »



Gordon Skipage
Head of Technical

How AI will help NZ kiwifruit and avocado growers over the next decade

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already transforming the global horticulture landscape, and New Zealand's kiwifruit and avocado growers stand to benefit significantly in the decade ahead. With the sector facing rising input costs, labour shortages, and increasing climate variability, AI offers powerful tools to help growers make better decisions, reduce waste, and enhance both yield and fruit quality.

One of AI's most valuable strengths is its ability to rapidly process large, complex datasets. Growers today are collecting more data than ever—weather patterns, soil moisture levels, satellite imagery, pest and disease counts, and yield forecasts—but very few have the time, capacity, or expertise to turn this information into clear, actionable decisions. This is where AI excels.

Modern AI platforms can integrate and analyse multiple data streams in real time, enabling precise recommendations for **irrigation, nutrient application, pest control, canopy management**, and **harvest timing**. For instance, growers can now use AI-powered dashboards that show spatial maps of canopy health or soil stress, allowing them to address problems before they affect crop performance. These insights reduce the guesswork and enable targeted, efficient use of resources.

Proven Results from Global Growers

Real-world results from international horticulture provide a glimpse of AI's impact. In California, avocado and citrus growers using AI-based irrigation systems, like those developed by Tule Technologies, have achieved **20-30% water savings** and **7-12% yield increases** by fine-tuning water applications based on plant transpiration data and weather forecasts. Similarly, in Israel, the company BloomX has introduced **AI-guided electrostatic pollination devices** for avocado trees, increasing fruit set by 30-40%, especially under poor pollination conditions where bee activity is low.

In Australia, apple growers deploying drone-based imaging and AI models to detect early signs of fungal disease have reduced fungicide usage by up to **30%**, lowering both costs and environmental impact. These examples show how AI can support more sustainable, precise, and profitable production systems.

Reducing Labour Reliance

Labour availability and cost are two of the biggest issues facing New Zealand's avocado and kiwifruit sectors. AI offers significant promise in automating repetitive or labour-intensive tasks. Robotic platforms guided by AI are already being trialled internationally for **weeding, spraying, and harvesting**, and as these technologies mature, they'll become increasingly viable for New Zealand growers.

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AI also enables **mobile apps** that use smartphone cameras and neural networks to detect **pests, flowers, or fruit size**, allowing even small growers to benefit from high-tech tools without heavy investment.

Looking Ahead: A Competitive Edge for Early Adopters

As climate change brings greater volatility, and international markets demand higher standards of traceability, sustainability, and consistency, AI will become not just an advantage—but a necessity. For growers, the key will be combining traditional orchard knowledge with AI-based tools to make smarter, data-driven decisions.

Over the next decade, early adopters of AI in New Zealand horticulture are likely to see gains in **profitability, quality, compliance, and market access**. With the right support and integration, AI could become one of the most important drivers of competitive advantage in the country's kiwifruit and avocado industries.

Note - this article was written using AI.

Sustainability »



Sarah Lei
Head of Sustainability

It's all about partnerships

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” African Proverb

In 2010, when we began our sustainability journey at Trevelyan's, we were trying to work out what we could do ourselves to help make the world a better place. We started out by doing a lot of internal measuring and monitoring to understand our impacts and identify where we could make a meaningful difference.

What we have learnt in the last 15 years can be summed up in the above quote. Our people, growers, community and the wider industry are an essential part of our sustainability journey, and we can have a much greater sustainability impact if we partner and share knowledge together.

To that end, we share our sustainability performance and learnings through our annual sustainability reports. Each report has been prepared in accordance with the latest Global Reporting Initiative Sustainability Reporting Standards (GRI Standards). The GRI Standards are the world's most widely used sustainability reporting standard. [We have just released our 2024 Sustainability Report](#), which is the eleventh report we have produced.



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What's new in this year's report?

In 2024, we made big strides on our sustainability journey by supporting and collaborating with others in our community and our wider industry.

- We have provided an update on our material sustainability issues.
- We have shared what went well (WINS) and where we need to improve (WORK ONS).
- We have showcased some of the key partnerships we have built up to help us go further and achieve greater sustainable outcomes.
- You will see a section about Jamie Hodgson, a recent Waikato University graduate, who designed this year's report; another initiative that reinforces our commitment to partnering and building professional relationships.

Our 2024 Sustainability Report also includes the following:

- Trevelyan's 2024 Highlights
- How we Work Smart
- How we Tread Lightly
- How we Respect our People
- Trevelyan's 2025 Goals

I encourage all of our stakeholders to take a read; there are some fantastic insights into our business and the teams that make it all happen. If you have any comments or questions, please get in touch sarah.lei@trevelyan.co.nz.

The logo for Trevelyan Growers Ltd (TGL) consists of the letters 'TGL' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, followed by two white chevrons '»'. The logo is set against a dark green, rounded rectangular background.

Colin Olesen
TGL Chair

Structures are important - so are the people that operate within them

Mainpack for all varieties is now complete, with the harvest weather being relatively kind to us this year. Packing out the CA stored fruit means the packhouse is still in operating mode. On the orchard, we move to winter pruning and setting up for our next crop. The fact that we produce a healthy food for the world makes our efforts and investment abundantly satisfying.

I would like to share my thoughts on our structure at Trevelyan's - our unique way of operating Trevelyan Growers Ltd (TGL) and how we partner with Trevelyan's Pack & Cool Ltd (TPCL). I do this periodically, as I believe, especially for our new Trevelyan's grower family members, that we should all be aware of this structure. A supply entity contracts with Zespri to supply fruit. TGL is one of sixteen kiwifruit supply entities. TGL then contracts with TPCL to receive, pack, coolstore, and deliver our fruit to the wharf for export by Zespri to market.

TGL has twelve Directors, of which three are appointed by TPCL. The other nine are grower-elected 'Grower Directors' who are elected for a three-year term. Three Grower Directors' terms expire each year. You could rightly state that the TGL Board of Directors is heavily weighted toward growers on the numbers, but even more so when the TGL Chair can only be elected from within the Grower Directors' pool. In the operation of TGL, all Directors see the relationship between TGL and TPCL as a partnership with formal contracts attached. Every challenge and operational issue is addressed on a partnership basis toward a win/win resolution. TGL needs TPCL, and TPCL needs TGL. There are some in the kiwifruit industry who view packhouse operators as 'having a major sway' in working with Zespri. In Trevelyan's case, TPCL does not deal (contract) with Zespri. That is done by TGL alone. From this, you can see that your nine Grower Directors have a significant level of contractual responsibility towards Trevelyan's growers, Zespri, and TPCL.

We welcome Kelly back to work. While Debbie and Angela made sure all operational matters relating to grower payments continued without a hitch, I am sure they are as pleased as I am to see Kelly return.

Very soon, it will be time for the Annual General Meeting of Trevelyan Growers Ltd. That includes Director elections. This year, we again elect three TGL Grower Directors for a three-year term. There are two Grower Directors completing their three-year term - Jeff Roderick and Steve Wright. Both are standing for re-election. Candidate nominations are now open and will close on the 10th of July. Nomination forms can be obtained from Kelly or Deb.

The daylight is now starting to get longer each day. Enjoy.

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

Ashby Whitehead
TAGL Chair

TAGL update and elections

At each TAGL meeting, we have both Jacob Darling from the Darling Group and Alistair Young from Avoco present a 'state of the markets' as they see it, along with the markets they intend to supply. Growers, if you have any questions relating to our export markets, you are welcome to contact one of your TAGL Board members.

As of our last TAGL meeting, Andrew Ball has resigned from his position on the board. We thank Andrew for his contribution and service during his tenure.

Growers, if you would like to be considered for the TAGL Board, I encourage you to put your hand up. It is always a pleasure to see new faces and hear new perspectives. The election will be held in July, so please get in touch before then if you'd like to be considered. To all of our growers, please make a real effort to cast your vote. By rotation, Ron Bailey and Nigel McPherson are up for re-election.

NZ Avocado will also be holding its elections this year. Again, please support them by making sure you cast your vote.

It was decided at our last meeting to continue the local market pool, which will run the duration of the export pool. During last season, roughly 100,000 trays of Trevelyan's Class 2 and 3 avocados were exported, alongside a larger number from other packing facilities. This lightened the load on the local market, which helped maintain better returns to growers. The season-long pool works as it improves cashflow for growers, with progress payments made throughout the export season.

As always, if you have any concerns or feedback, you can contact myself or any of your board representatives.

General »



Biosecurity: what's out there?

Did you know that exotic [fruit flies](#) and [brown marmorated stink bug](#) (BMSB) are the top two biosecurity threats to the New Zealand kiwifruit industry? This is based on their likelihood of arriving in the country and the consequences of their establishment on our production. Per the [New Zealand Kiwifruit Journal](#), it's estimated that "a fruit fly incursion in Te Puke could cost the kiwifruit industry between \$198 million and \$694 million, depending on how well the outbreak was contained".

Our friends over at KVH have sent through some interesting border stats around exotic fruit fly and BMSB from MPI's quarterly newsletter 'The Border Space' - [which we highly recommend subscribing to!](#) - and we thought it would be a good chance to share these, alongside The Border Space newsletter and some of KVH's valuable resources, to showcase some of the great biosecurity information and guidance that's out there!

The top five

The top five fruit fly host materials seized (declared and undeclared) from passengers arriving from countries with Oriental fruit fly between 1 September and 20 February.

| | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----------|-----|
| Apples | 336 | Oranges | 103 |
| Bananas | 194 | Jackfruit | 84 |
| Mandarins | 167 | | |

Between 1 September 2024 and 20 February 2025, the top five host fruits from passengers coming here from countries with Oriental fruit fly - the type of fly that caused the early 2025 responses in Auckland - were apples, bananas, mandarins, oranges, and jackfruit (April issue of [The Border Space](#)).

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BMSB numbers (provisional)

1 September 2024 – 30 April 2025

| | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Total BMSB | 1333 | 1303 |
| Live | 111 | 38 |
| Dead | 1222 | 1265 |
| Total detection events | 245 | 200 |

Live BMSB by pathway

| | 2023/24 | 2024/25 |
|------------------|---------|---------|
| Air Cargo | 7 | 7 |
| Cargo | 29 | 14 |
| Mail | 1 | 0 |
| Passenger | 52 | 14 |
| Vessel | 21 | 3 |
| Unknown | 1 | 0 |

Between 1 September 2024 and 30 April 2025, 38 live BMSBs were found alongside 1265 dead ones (June issue of [The Border Space](#)). The cargo pathway saw the highest proportions of BMSB, both dead and alive, with 642 and 14, respectively.

Biosecurity is everyone's responsibility in New Zealand, many of our livelihoods depend on it! KVH has a wealth of resources on their website to aid us in mitigating the likelihood of pest and disease establishment and the resulting consequences, including [a guide for growers on the likely sequence of events in a fruit fly response](#), a [BMSB readiness plan](#) and guidance on [how to create on-orchard biosecurity plans](#). Take a look!