

Trevelyan's Newsletter

Trevelyan's
Growing a better future

Overview »



James Trevelyan
Managing Director

Scooping up opportunities into the future

This time of year is the business end for dispatching fruit to market. We're firmly in our avocado export season, and in kiwifruit, we're repacking fruit that has typically been sitting in our coolstores for the last 15 to 21 weeks so it too can head offshore.

This kiwifruit storage and shipping season was always going to be more of a challenge than last year, with lower firmness in both Gold3 and Hayward lines at harvest. To add to the challenge is the doubling of pre-shipping fruit checks by the Zespri teams, the complexity of training, consistency and process for these new teams, and the doubling of offshore penalties for suppliers. With these extra layers, everyone is looking more closely at results, both onshore and offshore.

At Trevelyan's, we support the drive to lift quality but acknowledge the challenges this presents as we change to new quality processes. In the market, a consumer may choose a Zespri piece of fruit for its health benefits, but if the quality isn't there, why would they make that purchase? The quality of our fruit is a fundamental must for a purchase to happen.

At last month's G4 leadership table, we met Carl Cooper, Executive Officer for Innovation & Commercialisation at Zespri. Carl leads a team tasked with driving innovation projects.

My experience is that innovative solutions come from solving challenging problems, and right now the industry has many. Our provocation to Carl is this: does the industry have the right "plumbing", or information flow, to be able to hear these challenges up and down the supply chain?

Let's give all these problems a home, plenty of love, and see how many opportunities we can scoop up. Maybe we could start with the scope of the NZKGI "In market supply chain review" and find it a home so that we can answer the question "does the industry have a world-class supply chain?"

A portrait of John Lewitt, a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt, smiling. He is positioned in front of a wooden slatted background.

Operations »

John Lewitt
Head of Operations &
Logistics

Kiwifruit operations update

Fruit quality this season is proving to be more challenging than in 2025 across both the Conventional fruit groups. Fruit loss for both the industry and Trevelyan's is tracking at double the levels of 2025 for both Hayward Conventional and Gold Conventional.

Both Hayward Organic and Gold Organic fruit loss levels are tracking at similar levels to 2025 for both the industry and Trevelyan's.

The main reason for repacking Gold this season is rots, with superficial skin rub and non-pathogenic fungal growth being the main causes of fruit loss; in Hayward, it is for overripes and rots, with the main causes of fruit loss coming from non-pathogenic fungal growth and soft fruit.

We still have approximately 500,000 trays to ship across all varieties and expect shipping to conclude in early November.

We are well underway with our packing and coolstore upgrades for 2027. The industry is moving from a 5.7 kg ML pack to a larger 7.6 kg MX pack for Gold, which results in 8% more fruit per pallet. This means we are only building one new three-high racked coolstore to cope with the increase in tray volume that is forecast for 2027.

Our packing automation equipment is due to be installed by the end of the year. In Packhouse 4, we are replacing our InVision camera grading system with a new Tomra Spectrim LUCAi vision grading system. We expect to see substantial improvements in grading accuracy and decision making with this new equipment.

We are also installing two robotic palletising systems, one in Packhouse 2 and the other in Packhouse 3. Each of these systems is capable of processing 24 bulk packs per minute, which equates to 3,000 trays per hour per system.

Now we pivot to the pollen season. The Operations Team are now starting to prepare for the upcoming harvest and milling season that is forecast to commence soon after the kiwifruit shipping season concludes.



Brent McDowell
Kiwifruit Grower Liaison

Hayward - to cut or not to cut?

With Mike off jet-setting this month, he's asked me to share a few thoughts with you.

As the title suggests, many of my thoughts have been coming back to the recent positivity around Hayward and the current viability of cutover. Discussions and thoughts on this are mainly due to the recent industry announcement regarding the newly proposed Green 146.

It wasn't too long ago when it felt like Green growing was a really tough gig; yield wasn't always flash, tray price returns were as little as \$4-\$5 each, and the compounding production costs each year seemed to be soaring. It always felt like lots was going out and not much was coming back in.

As a Green grower, I certainly felt this pain too. As we peered over the fence at the neighbouring Gold3 blocks, it really started to feel like we were playing a different ball game. Those who took the early punt on Gold now seemed to be in top gear, indeed off and running. Even if a humble Hayward grower was finally ready to have a go at joining this party, it felt somewhat financially out of reach, like that ship had sailed.

It turns out we were not an isolated case. I recall the real frustration from Green growers as a group, we would see photos offshore of Hayward and Gold on the market shelves being sold at the same price. This was confusing to say the least, where was the disconnect?

By this point, a groundswell of frustration was building, so much so it triggered a meeting which was held at the Orchard Church in Te Puke in 2022. 'The Green Growers Town Hall meeting' had begun. The room was stacked, and for good reason. What transpired was a morning of pointy conversations, motivated by growers' commercial tension and the frustration of feeling like there were no real options. Positively, I felt that voices were truly heard during that meeting, and I now think it was an extremely pivotal point for Hayward as a variety of fruit.

Following that meeting, some really positive movements began. It triggered stronger tray returns for Hayward growers, as well as an ascending licence auction and a cutover pool just for Hayward growers. They would have the opportunity to join the race while competing for a licence only against their peers. A real second chance for many.

Although it didn't resolve all Hayward growers' problems, the cutover pool was deemed successful for the industry. Alongside this, we saw the Hayward tray prices steadily climbing in the right direction.

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As of today, when we look at the landscape and where a Green grower currently sits, tray returns are very strong with an industry-average forecast of \$9.90 per tray and \$99,793 per ha according to [Zespri's 2026 August OGR Forecast](#).

Numbers that we now expect from Hayward could only be dreamed of a few short years ago. This has obviously flowed through with optimism in the real estate space too, and Hayward growers are in a strong position again with orchard values.

This brings my thoughts to what the future looks like for Hayward blocks. If you're still in the boat, currently the main options are:

1. Leave your Hayward block as is and ride the wave, enjoying the strong returns.
2. Cutover to Gold3, with possible licence costs of around \$684,000 + GST per ha (as seen in [May's unrestricted Gold3 auction](#)).
3. Cutover to the new Red80 with possible licence costs of around \$457,000 + GST per ha (as seen in [April's unrestricted Red80 auction](#)).
4. Finally, wait with the promise of the new Green 146, with a price yet to be determined – is this an option?

In terms of the Green 146 option, key considerations would be:

- Is 146 different enough?
- What is the price per ha?
- What will the yield be at my place?
- Is the later harvest with frost or hail risk worth it?
- What's the projected return per tray?
- Do I need to update my structures and need more shelter?
- Can I sustain a year without crop?
- What will the Green 146 do to the Hayward tray returns if it is marketed under the same umbrella?
- And finally...could I actually bring myself to put a chainsaw through my old loyal, now well-performing and returning Hayward block?

Each grower will have different circumstances and motivations, like plant performance, soil type, elevation and pure appetite for risk on something new.

In 2024 I cut over three hectares of Hayward to Gold3 on our own orchard. At that time we were a Hayward-only grower, so on paper it made perfect sense. But as I stood there and watched the teams cut out the canopy, followed by the bobcat on leaders and a chainsaw on the trunk, it looked extremely confronting. Like wow, I hope we've made the right decision, as there's certainly no going back now!

Watching the grafters perform their art in this now-barren block, which only weeks before was once covered by lush growth, I stood there wondering if these little scions would ever fire? It certainly felt like at that point, it was all up to hopes and dreams!

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These wee things had to be nurtured like a child, needing protection against frost, snails, birds and Psa, all on top of the risk of the graft just not taking or firing. However, I remember being amazed at the power and resilience of mother nature finding a way, and the buds had finally burst. The excitement and relief that maybe this was going to work was something to experience. There was plenty of work to do yet, but each milestone felt like good momentum and reassurance that we might actually get there. I'm proud to say that this year we harvested our first Gold crop, off a root system my father planted all the way back in 1969. Kiwifruit never ceases to amaze me.

So, do you have Green blocks that are returning well? What are your thoughts - to cut - or not to cut?



Dan Birnie
Head of Avocado

Communication is key

At Trevelyan's, we aim to have regular, concise communication with our growers so they can make good, informed decisions for their orchards, their fruit and themselves.

Sometimes I wonder whether our communications are delivering on that aim, so I try to consider what information matters to growers and what is missing. Two recent conversations with growers gave me some good input.

First, I was dropping off bin cards to Emma Kapua and Wayne McNaughton's orchard at the base of the Papamoa Hills. They were just getting ready to rope their son in for picking during the school holidays. Emma quizzed me on our comparative reports, which she found on our Grower Portal. She mentioned that she had been looking at them and found them useful to see how their orchard is performing against others, and how their OGR is looking. She liked the fact that they went back a few seasons but questioned the whereabouts of last year's one (promise it'll be with you soon Emma, just need some info from the marketers!) Great feedback, thanks Emma!

The same day, Matthew Hareb emailed me, asking why we weren't reporting on the value of a bin in our weekly Avocado Update. I replied saying that it's because we are not packing any local market growers at the moment. I also said, "Hey - I will change that - and I will have a go at reporting on both what an export grower and a local market grower can expect when they pick into the season-long pools" (we will start picking local-only growers again when there is an opportunity). Also great feedback, thanks Matt!

Two interactions in one day, both valuable questions and comments, and it made me think:

1. We're on the right track with the information growers find important.
2. There's room to improve.
3. It's great that our growers can communicate with us and share their feedback.

Communication truly is key.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to ask Anne or me when you see us next (or text/call/email, whatever works for you). We appreciate the feedback.

On a different note, I'd like to thank our GAP and Lab Teams, Glenys at NZ Avocado, and Wanda at AVOCO, for assisting with recent clearances to pick and Spray Diary issues. There have been a few of them this season, and they've been a real help getting our growers' fruit ready for export.

Technical »



Gordon Skipage
Head of Technical

Spring/summer outlook: what this season's El Niño means for calcium and fruit quality

NIWA's latest outlook confirms a very strong El Niño, with around a 90% chance it strengthens into one of the strongest on record. For Bay of Plenty and Northland growers, that's a spring and summer very different from last year's wet, mild conditions: roughly 50% odds of below-normal rainfall, likely warmer-than-average temperatures, and an increased risk of windy spells from mid-spring on. Whatever you're growing, plan for dry and windy rather than wet.

Why this matters for calcium

Fruit calcium is set almost entirely in the weeks around and after flowering, moving into fruit via the xylem, carried by transpiration (water pulled through the plant as leaves and fruit lose moisture to the air). Once that window closes, no later application makes up the shortfall. Calcium builds and strengthens cell walls, keeping fruit firm, slowing ripening, and giving it its main defence against softening and rot in storage.

Kiwifruit: watch irrigation, not calcium, this year

Dry, sunny, windy weather can actually favour calcium loading in kiwifruit, where wind lifts transpiration, and good light improves the vascular connections that carry calcium into fruit – a welcome change after last spring's wet conditions, which likely contributed to this year's softer fruit and storage challenges. The real risk this season isn't calcium deficiency; it's under-irrigation. Wind dries soil faster than it looks, and if moisture isn't topped up, vines close their stomata to conserve water, collapsing calcium delivery and permanently capping fruit size, since the same six-to-eight-week window after full bloom governs cell division. Wind also brings “wind rub” – scarring from fruit rubbing against leaves, canes and wires – driving rejects, independent of internal quality.

Avocados: a different story, since most orchards aren't irrigated

Avocado calcium uptake follows the same transpiration-driven, one-way path through the xylem, concentrated around the root flush before flowering; however, avocado roots sit mostly in the top 30 cm of soil, giving trees far less buffer against a dry snap than deeper-rooted crops. Under El Niño, that's double-edged: less waterlogging risk and lower Phytophthora pressure, but a moisture reserve that wind and heat can exhaust quickly, ultimately reducing calcium delivery and fruit size, and raising the risks of cold damage, premature ripening and pulp discolouration in storage.

New Zealand is one of the few countries that is commercially growing avocados largely without irrigation, so the irrigation-first advice above doesn't translate directly. Therefore, calcium nutrition and soil balance are the more useful levers. Calcium moves into the plant with water and doesn't relocate once there, so a steady supply beats one big application. Applying heavy amounts of nitrogen works against growers by fuelling vegetative growth. Vegetative growth competes with fruit for calcium, so go easy on it before and during flowering.

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Soil calcium and pH are worth checking rather than guessing; hopefully you've already conducted a soil test and applied fertiliser (including a source of calcium) as per your consultant's recommendation. Here are some helpful ideas to remember when working with nutrients and different soil pHs:

1. Adding calcium when the soil has a low pH will only help "correct" soil pH, with the calcium not being made available to the plant.
2. If pH needs lifting, lime (calcium carbonate) raises pH whilst adding calcium.
3. If pH is already adequate but soil compaction is an issue, gypsum (calcium sulphate) helps with flocculation and aeration without shifting pH further.
4. Avoid calcium nitrate (CN fertiliser) as your main source, since it brings nitrogen with it.
5. Don't over-apply calcium generally – too much can lock up phosphate, magnesium and potassium.
6. If your pH is too high (>7.2), then applying sulphur-based fertilisers such as ammonium sulphate and elemental sulphur can gradually lower your pH if practised over a couple of seasons. This also holds true for kiwifruit soils.

What growers can do this season:

Kiwifruit (irrigated blocks)

- Prioritise irrigation through the critical window around flowering and fruit set – it can't be made up later.
- Monitor soil moisture with probes or tensiometers, not by feel; wind dries soil faster than it looks.
- Check irrigation infrastructure and tidy up shelterbelts to cut wind rub.

Avocados (mostly non-irrigated)

- Mulch and maintain groundcover to hold soil moisture through summer and autumn.
- Soil/leaf tests should've already been conducted to check pH and calcium status before choosing lime or gypsum.
- Go easy on nitrogen before and during flowering, and avoid calcium nitrate as your main calcium source – a larger canopy will mop up calcium and increase water use.
- Manage cropload and vigour through pruning rather than adding extra nitrogen.
- Reinforce shelter – wind adds to moisture loss.
- Consider the use of sunscreen products like Parasol, Budmate and Haven that lower leaf temperature and reduce water usage.

The bottom line

This isn't a repeat of last year's wet-spring, low-calcium season. Irrigated kiwifruit blocks that stay ahead on watering should track normal to well, with wind rub the main defect to watch. Avocado growers are more exposed through summer/autumn fruit size and yield, and soil testing, paired with sensible nitrogen and calcium management, are the best levers without irrigation.

Further reading

[Larocca, G. N., Baldi, E., & Toselli, M. \(2025\). Understanding the Role of Calcium in Kiwifruit: Ion Transport, Signaling, and Fruit Quality. Horticulturae, 11\(3\), 335.](#)

Sustainability »



Georgia Mischefski-Gray
Sustainability Advisor

Zespri's renewed sustainability targets

At the Momentum Conference in February 2026, [Zespri announced a new Climate Change Transition Plan](#), which included revised sustainability targets. The changes in the targets reflected current sustainability trends, which see companies moving towards targets that are less ambitious and more achievable. Zespri's new targets maintain their goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and support a low-emissions, climate-resilient kiwifruit industry.

Progress towards achieving these targets is detailed in the [Zespri Annual Report 2025/26](#). The table below shows these targets, how they've changed from the targets set in 2020, and the progress made by Zespri to date. Green-highlighted areas show on-track results for the respective goals.

Zespri 2030/31 Sustainability Target Scorecard as of 2025/26

Target	Change from 2020 target	What the Target means	2025/26 Result
42 percent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030/31 (2024/25 base year).	The target rolls back their initial carbon-neutral corporate emissions by 2025.	This covers fuel, refrigerants, and electricity, which is used directly by Zespri employees and offices.	-5% (613 to 581tCO ₂ e)
30 percent reduction in shipping emissions per tray equivalent from New Zealand by 2030/31 (2022/23 base year).	These are completely new targets and have changed from the previous targets of carbon-positive supply chains and partners.	Based on a per-tray rate, shipping emissions will be reduced. Shipping emissions can increase overall but the overall intensity per tray will decrease.	-10% (1.39 to 1.25)
An Orchard Climate Innovation Mission to identify, trial and demonstrate practical emissions reduction and removal options on orchard.		This is relatively open-ended target, with aims to do orchard R&D, share those learnings and complete a standard for carbon removal options, and support growers to complete Zespri GAP requirements.	Not clearly scorable.

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90 percent of packaging (by weight) is recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2030/31.	This target replaces Zespri's earlier 100% by 2025 target.	Packaging will be more recyclable, reusable or compostable.	88% recyclable, reusable or compostable.
30 percent of plastic packaging (by weight) is made from recycled plastic by 2030/31.	This increases the timeframe to achieve this target; previously, this was 30% by 2025.	Plastic materials used in the packaging will be from recycled sources	16% made from recycled plastic.

We are encouraged by the effort Zespri is making to stay on track with its targets. Trevelyan's is committed to ensuring a more sustainable kiwifruit industry, and we are supporting Zespri to achieve their targets in several ways:

1. We have trialed new packaging materials on behalf of the industry.
2. We attend industry sub-groups for sustainability and packaging, where we share our own learnings.
3. This year, we've collaborated with other postharvest operators to standardise emissions reporting.
4. We collaborated on an award-winning industry refrigerants project to help reduce the impact of refrigerant leaks on our climate. The report on this project can be found [here](#).

We're always looking for more ways to collaborate and make the kiwifruit industry more sustainable. If you have any ideas to help support our efforts, please reach out to our sustainability team.

The logo for Trevelyan Growers Ltd (TGL) features the letters 'TGL' in white on a dark green background, followed by two yellow chevrons pointing to the right.

Colin Olesen
TGL Chair
Trevelyan Growers Ltd (TGL)

The future is often a choice of pathways – making the choice is the hard part

We had an excellent Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in August, with Zespri representatives present and answering searching questions. The proposed changes to the TGL Growers voting policy were approved at the AGM.

The Grower Director elections resulted in Mat Johnston and Murray Cresswell being re-elected and Courtney Bragg elected as our newest Grower Director.

At the first Director's meeting after the AGM, I was re-elected as Chair, and Simon Cook re-elected as Deputy Chair. I have advised the TGL Board that I intend to stand down from the Board at the 2027 AGM.

Nominations for the role of Associate Director in TGL for the two-year period commencing January 2027 have closed. The TGL Board will receive a recommendation from the Selection sub-committee at their October Board meeting. It is an excellent pathway to full Board membership. Courtney Bragg was elected to the TGL Board after experiencing TGL Board activity as an Associate Director.

After many years of advocating for greater transparency of Supply Entity results, your Directors were pleased to see unblinded scorecards now published on the Zespri Canopy website. The Packing Defects scores remain blinded. Trevelyan's values transparency, so your Directors will continue to work towards achieving that goal. Please have a look at the unblinded scorecards and enter into discussions with your fellow kiwifruit growers on what the results speak to you about.

Over the coming months, Zespri will be encouraging discussion around what should be done, if anything, concerning the China unauthorised growers of the Zespri-owned PVR known as G3. In particular, New Zealand growers need to know the risks associated with potential pathways forward. Only after these risks have been fully assessed can we expect growers to pass judgement on what they think is the best way forward. There is the strong possibility of Zespri taking this matter to a Producer Vote in 2027, so that a decision, one way or the other, can be made. Please take time to develop your knowledge and understanding of the risks by asking your questions at Industry forums and shed talks that will, no doubt, be available.

Some of your TGL Directors will shortly be returning from a self-funded kiwifruit market visit to Europe. They do this to enhance their appreciation of the challenges and opportunities currently facing our industry on the world stage. We grow not just a fruit, but an amazing health product that adds immense value to the world food basket. And we learn, not just from hearing, but at times from seeing, what is going on in the food world of trade.

Fruit storage has been more of a challenge this year than last. Climatic events have, perhaps, had a contribution to the adverse change. It is usual for Trevelyan's fruit storage results to pull ahead of industry averages in the later part of the marketing season, so we look forward to a repeat of that again.

The TAGL logo consists of the letters 'TAGL' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, followed by two white chevrons '»'. This logo is positioned on the left side of a dark green rectangular background that has rounded corners on its right side.

Ashby Whitehead
TAGL Chair
Trevelyan Avocado Growers
Ltd (TAGL)

TAGL update

The avocado export season has now kicked off, with picking well underway across the industry.

Fruit quality is varying from orchard to orchard, with Trevelyan's currently achieving average packouts of 63% for Class 1 and 20% for Class 2. AVOCO is looking to increase the number of Class 2 trays going into export markets, which will help reduce the volume of fruit going into the local market and hopefully provide additional value for growers.

Many growers in the Bay of Plenty have experienced a severe frost recently, which has caused considerable damage to some orchards. Most of the damaged fruit will have dropped by now, giving growers a clearer indication of the extent of the damage. In some areas, temperatures fell as low as -6°C, resulting in severe damage. Unfortunately, some of these trees may never fully recover.

On a more positive note, the outlook for export markets is very encouraging. AVOCO is concentrating on retail opportunities to maximise returns for the season ahead.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Nigel McPherson for his time on the TAGL Board. We thank Nigel for his service and commitment and wish him all the very best for the future.

General »



50 years of Trevelyan's packing operation

2026 marks the 50-year milestone of Trevelyan's as a commercial packing operation! To see how far we've come over the last half-century, read through of our milestones below or [check out the history page on our website!](#)

1965

1976

2026

Trevelyan's Farm

50 years of commercial packing



1965

Trevelyan's farm purchased



1976

Kiwifruit packing begins



1995

Avocado packing begins



2022

1M avocado trays packed



2025

20M C1 kiwifruit trays packed

- 1965** ● John and Elizabeth Trevelyan buy a dairy farm at 310 No. 1 Road, Te Puke.
- 1971** ● First kiwifruit vines planted.
- 1976** ● Packhouse 1 built — packing moves in-house.
- 1980** ● Coolstores built for longer-term fruit storage.
- 1995** ● Avocado packing and distribution begins.
- 1998** ● **1 million** kiwifruit trays packed for the first time.
- 2000** ● Trevelyan's Growers Ltd (TGL) established.
- 2005** ● Zespri Organic Green and Gold packing begins. Packhouse 2 built.
- 2007** ● **5 million** kiwifruit trays packed for the first time.
- 2008** ● Packhouse 3 built.
- 2009** ● Onsite campground developed. James Trevelyan returns as Managing Director.
- 2011** ● Trevelyan's Managed Orchards (TMO) established.
- 2012** ● Pollen processing begins with No. 1 Road Pollen.
- 2014** ● NutriKiwi formed with other suppliers to send Class 2 Green to Australia.
- 2015** ● **13 million** kiwifruit trays packed. New Zealand Golden Kiwifruit Company set up to supply the domestic market.
- 2016** ● Packhouse 4 built. **15 million** kiwifruit trays packed.
- 2022** ● Trevelyan Avocado Growers Ltd (TAGL) formed. **1 million** avocado trays packed.
- 2023** ● First controlled atmosphere (CA) store built.
- 2024** ● First automation added to the packhouses.
- 2025** ● **20 million** Class 1 kiwifruit trays packed.
- 2026** ● First ammonia refrigerant coolstore built and first automated stackers added to packhouses.