

# QUARTERLY PROGRESS SUMMARY: July-September 2019

## *New Zealand Avocados Go Global - Extension*

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### Background

The New Zealand Avocados Go Global Extension began in July 2019 with four key objectives: market insights, trusted supply chain, evidence based sustainability and a feasibility study for an industry breeding programme. This is a two year programme that builds strongly on the original Go Global outcomes to further grow new and existing markets with a differentiated avocado from a trusted and sustainable industry.

## Summary of progress

### Market insights

- Extension activities relating to market insights included in Exporter promotions group agenda and planning discussions.
- Agencies identified to undertake sensory testing and evaluations for sensory research. Objectives for this research on agenda for the Exporter promotions working group.
- Proposals requested for consumer and sensory research – received from ForwardHQ for pilot consumer sensory project in Korea.
- Proposals requested for reporting on insights from NZ Avocado social media testing on differentiated story - received from Datamine and waiting proposal from Meltwater.

### Trusted supply chain

- NZ Avocado has completed a range of consultation with Regional Councils, growers and service providers to provide growers with a series of online resources via the NZ Avocado website.
- These online resources consist of six essential areas of knowledge a grower will require to be able to build their individual eco credentials in water. These essential areas of knowledge include: the use of water, measuring your water use, the optimum amount of water to use, water consents, good management practice for water and understanding the rules (legislation, policy and plans).
- All existing milestones for this project will begin in year two.

### Evidence based sustainability

- Sustainability working group members have been identified and first workshop arrangements made.
- The initial strategy workshop will look across other sectors approach to sustainability to develop a set of immediate and longer term actions. The group will help prioritise the initial focus areas (orchard inputs/outputs, water use, chemical use, carbon/nitrogen cycling), understand what data is already available and therefore what needs to be collected from industry, what monitoring and reporting frameworks are used across primary industry groups and determine research needs going forward.
- Sustainably related programs of work:
  - NZ Avocado was on the leadership group that planned and held the inaugural BOP Future Farming Symposium where 300 growers and rural professionals came together to hear an overview of the types of upcoming regulations growers will face, particularly under the new Essential Freshwater plan and related environmental sustainability initiatives.
  - NZ Avocado has a goal to find an alternative to methyl bromide for pre-export insect treatment for avocados that maintains fruit quality and reduces the pest loads on export fruit. Phosphine fumigation is being investigated (partially funded by SFFF). This project aims to understand the fruit quality issues when applying insecticidal ECO2FUME® as a pre-export fumigation targeting mites and other insects.
  - Avocado Leafroller Mating Disruption – From Blend Optimisation to Dispenser Optimisation with aim to evaluate the efficacy of mating disruption technology as an alternative and more sustainable option to chemical control.

### Industry breeding programme – feasibility study

- A brainstorming workshop was held with members of the Avocado Nursery Association (ANA), Plant & Food Research and NZ Avocado to document an approach to the feasibility study. This was a valuable meeting bringing together those

within the industry that are propagating new and emerging cultivars with the scientists who are actively working on a number of other sectors breeding programmes.

- A stock take of available genetic material (varieties) within NZ and their PVR status has been undertaken and a register has been drafted from industry and nursery information. Consultation has begun with PVR holders regarding legal/contractual options to work with PVR material in a future breeding programme.
- The tender for a project with leading tissue culture researchers/laboratories in NZ to undertake trial in avocado tissue culture has been complete with a contract received from Tissue Culture provider and with NZ Avocado to determine start date and provision of PVR material.
- Work also taken place with offshore Master license holders to gain permission to use protected material in tissue culture experiments.

## Key highlights and achievements

- NZ Avocado won their bid to host the 2023 World Avocado Congress in New Zealand during the WAC event during September in Colombia. NZ Avocado had significant support from Tourism New Zealand and MFAT. Jen Scouler emphasised in her address that sustainability was paramount for the future success of the industry and that it will require a collaborative and global effort and will be a central theme throughout the Congress to be hosted in New Zealand in 2023.



## Upcoming

- An initial meeting of an industry sustainability working group has been set with relevant experts and those with linkages with other primary sector sustainability strategies.
- A number of aligned research projects are currently underway that will help support the current PGP objectives. These include: The SFF Avovantage on-orchard rot control programme, mating disruption, phosphine trials, chilling injury trials and best practice transport resources, water blaster review and training and assessments of future industry fungicides.