

MERRY KIWI(FRUIT) CHRISTMAS



Dear Growers,

2017 has been an extremely busy year for NZKGI with many notable achievements. Growers can be very pleased with NZKGI reaching significant milestones such as gaining strong support for the continuation of NZKGI's levy, amending the Kiwifruit Regulations, signing the Enduring Funding model, supporting the establishment of the Māori Kiwifruit Growers Forum and conducting an independent audit into the direct and indirect pool costs for 2016/17.

However, 2017 hasn't only been a year of highs. Growers battled a very wet season which contributed to low dry matter and flooding, with particular note of the Tasman Tempest and ex-cyclone Debbie. Total volumes of 125 million trays were also slightly down on 2016's 145 million trays. Kiwifruit contractors also got a lot of negative publicity after some of those audited were found to be failing minimum labour standards. One other concerning event was the breach of Gold3 and Gold9 plant variety rights.

But NZKGI's 2017 has really been a year of the people. NZKGI has been very pleased that senior members of the kiwifruit industry, Peter Ombler and Dr David Steven, were recognised for their contributions as well as Jim Gray and Alby Osbourne, who received the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Recognition was also made of two members of the NZKGI Executive, with Simon Cook being named a 2017 Nuffield scholar and Debbie Oakley being selected for the Industry Governance Development Programme.

Our young and upcoming horticulturalists also proved to be punching above their weight. Nine out of the 17 participants selected for this year's Horticulture New Zealand leadership programme are involved in the kiwifruit industry. Particular note must also be made of Erin Atkinson who was crowned Young Grower of the Year, the national Young Grower of the Year competition and went on to compete in the Young Horticulturalist of the Year Award.

Within NZKGI there were several changes of people this year. Executive Committee member Mike Smith retired from his position by rotation and was replaced by Debbie Oakley. Forum members, Andrew Hill (Waihi/Coromandel) and John Ericksen (Hawkes Bay and Lower North Island) and Terry Richards (Te Puke) resigned from their positions and were replaced by Andrew Dawson, Richard Pentreath and Ross Bawden respectively.

NZKGI was also pleased to welcome Lynda McCalman as the Performance and Supply Manager to lead the development and implementation of NZKGI's Performance portfolio and recommendations from KISP. Another new staff member, Katy McGinity, replaced Kate Longman's position. Katy focuses on the Education portfolio and has been providing policy support in the External Relations portfolio. There was also the sad passing away of valuable members of the kiwifruit industry including Maria Ngatai, Mike Muller and Jim Gray.

2018 is already looking to be as full as this year. NZKGI will be placing a significant priority on advocating for growers in the areas of water, labour and land alongside ongoing monitoring of Zespri performance and guidance on meeting Health & Safety requirements.

2018 will also see elections for grower representatives on the Forum mid-year. As in 2017, NZKGI will continue to advocate for growers across all of our portfolios and will keep growers and the industry up to date on our activities through the Weekly Update email. The key to representing growers effectively is to make sure we hear from you, our growers. Your input is vital. Talk to your Forum representatives (contact details on the NZKGI website - www.nzkgi.org.nz) or contact the NZKGI office via info@nzkgi.org.nz or 0800 232 505.

The NZKGI Forum, Executive and staff, wish all growers a wonderful Christmas and summer break and here's to a fantastic 2018.



Doug Brown, NZKGI Chairman