A career in horticulture is not just about picking and packing fruit; there are many highly valued roles available in the scientific, business and technology sectors. People enter the kiwifruit industry through many different pathways – from seasonal workers in the orchards or packhouses, through to graduates with specific degrees. At every level there is training available to upskill and build a rewarding career. This chapter includes a career map displaying the wide range of opportunities available. There are also biographies of industry entrants to show the pathways they took to get where they are today.
Horticulture Career Progression Managers
Te Ara Mahi

WHO WE ARE
A network of six managers working across New Zealand to increase the number of people pursuing careers in horticulture, so the industry can continue to grow and prosper.

HOW WE WORK
Our chief role is to link work ready people with horticulture employers, by acting as the interface between people, our industry, schools and tertiary education and training providers, and government agencies.

We promote horticulture careers by getting young people at secondary school or people already in the workforce to see potential in our diverse and vibrant industry.

We help young people decide on the training that is right for them and work out their training pathway.

We help young people find the right employer for them - employers who can offer on-job training and career mentoring.

We work with employers, helping them anticipate and meet skill needs, and provide them with work ready people.

We work with schools and tertiary education and training providers so that they meet our industry’s needs by staying up to date with requirements.

WHAT WE WILL ACHIEVE
The right people for the right job - a workforce with the right training and attitude, advancing their horticulture careers and our industry.

To contact a Career Progression Manager, please email: GoHorticulture@hortnz.co.nz

www.gohorticulture.co.nz

The Career Progression Manager network is supported with funding from the Government’s Provincial Growth Fund and the New Zealand Fruitgrowers Charitable Trust.
Horticulture New Zealand recognised that growth in all horticultural sectors is driving a strong demand for skilled people to take on existing and future roles within the industry. With funding from the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF), six Regional Career Coordinators have been contracted. They are positioned in the largest growing areas in the country (Northland, Bay of Plenty, Hawke’s Bay, Nelson/Tasman and Central Otago) and tasked with increasing the numbers of students entering into full time study, industry training, and employment in the horticulture and viticulture sectors.

They work with schools, tertiary education and vocational training organisations, industry employers and government agencies to highlight the pathways for people to find rewarding careers within the horticultural industry.

GoHort has become the brand for the career progression managers, with an online presence at https://gohorticula.co.nz/

On this site you will find

- Descriptions of different roles.
- Career pathways.
- Training providers and the courses they offer.
- Sector specific information and links.
- Profiles of people in the horticulture industry.
- Details of GoHort internships and how to apply.
- A job board for employers to advertise permanent roles in the industry.
- Contact details for the Regional Career Progression Managers.
- Resources for teachers to use.
As indicated in the horticulture career map on the previous page, there are a number of ways to enter the industry whether it be through direct employment, part time study and employment, or full-time study.

**Full-Time Employment**
Roll up your sleeves and hit the ground running by entering the industry directly to get valuable work experience. Once you are in the industry, many employers offer study opportunities so that you can advance on the job.

**Part-Time Study/Employment**
Earn while you learn by working within a kiwifruit orchard, packhouse or kiwifruit-related business. There are study options to suit everyone from Level 1 Horticulture through to apprenticeships.

**Full-Time Study**
Study a range of subjects such as business, engineering, science and horticulture all of which are applicable to a career in the kiwifruit industry.

The next page will provide career profiles of people who have entered the kiwifruit industry by way of full-time study, part-time study/employment and direct employment.
9.3 CAREER PROFILES

CAMPBELL WOOD

Role/Organisation: Director of Pivot Horticulture

Pathway: Cadetship/Apprenticeship/Further Industry Study

What I enjoy about this industry is the diversity of working with lots of people coming from a range of cultures and places around the world. The kiwifruit industry offers a huge range of professional development opportunities which have helped advance my career and I am passionate about attracting young people to the industry so that they too can experience the amazing opportunities that are available.

What I like to tell younger versions of myself deciding what career path to take is this:

• Knuckle down and stick to an industry - ride out the highs and multiple lows
• Do the hard yards - work harder than expected, invest in doing more than required, don't be afraid “to sweep the factory floor”
• Push yourself out of comfort zone on a regular basis - take on challenges where you think you’re out of your depth and own the outcome be it positive or negative

MEGAN FOX

Role/Organisation: Orchard Technical Advisor, Southern Cross Horticulture

Pathway: University Degree

I love working in the kiwifruit industry because there is a huge network of supportive people both within my workplace, and externally, that are always willing to lend a hand or impart valuable knowledge. Further, it is an exciting industry to be a part of as there are a lot of opportunities to move laterally across the industry as well as huge potential to move up very quickly. Currently we are planting 700ha per year of G3, and the average orchard manager is managing 50ha, meaning we need to hire 14 new orchard managers every year to help with our growth - the demand for skilled labour is huge. I would recommend anyone to consider entering the kiwifruit industry to gain access to some amazing career opportunities!

WAI DE FLAVELLE

Role/Organisation: Inventory and Logistics Coordinator at EastPack

Pathway: Direct Employment

I started out in the industry working in the packhouse at EastPack located in Te Puke and within those five years I have worked in a range of roles including; Packer, Packhouse Team Leader, Allocations Coordinator, Field Technician, Crop Assessment Team Leader, Inventory Assistant and finally to my current role as Inventory and Logistics Coordinator. I have found that in this industry, if you are a hard worker you can progress very quickly! There are so many opportunities within the kiwifruit industry to learn, grow and develop a meaningful career.
STACEY MARINO

Role/Organisation: Orchard Supervisor, Kiwifruit Investments
Pathway: Direct Employment

I started as a packer and then a grader in the packhouse. After my first harvest I stayed on and did the re-pack season. The following year, I got asked to be a packaging supervisor, teaching others the skills I learnt in packing and grading. The industry has an array of jobs and so many areas to branch off in, whether it’s in the packhouse or the orchard. I tried fruit thinning the next year and loved it even more than being in the packhouse because I enjoy being outdoors. Supervisors and managers will spot you out and advance you. They put a lot into helping people, and giving them different skills and areas to work in. I really enjoy the work because it’s always changing, and I enjoy teaching people. I love learning new things, and the industry is always evolving.

GAVIN STAGG

Role/Organisation: Labour Coordinator, New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated
Pathway: Direct Employment

Until I joined the kiwifruit industry, the longest I’d held a job was two years. In this business, no two days are the same, so it keeps me interested! Prior to kiwifruit, I trained as a chef, joined the army, and held various other positions, mostly managing people. My first role in kiwifruit was as an employment officer for a packhouse. As my industry knowledge grew, I was promoted to Packhouse Operations Manager in a year. From there, I secured a new role as an Operations Manager for a different packhouse which involved managing the entire site. I left that role in early 2019 to start my current role with NZKGI. The highlight of this role is the different people that I get to interact with, from contractors, growers and packhouses through to government agencies.

BRYCE MORRISON

Role/Organisation: Technical Services and Innovation Manager at Fruition Horticulture
Pathway: University Degree

Whatever field of work you are interested in, horticulture has a place for you. Whether it’s law, mechanics or marketing, these all play a role in our industry. In my role, I manage a small team of technicians who help deliver services such as crop estimates, irrigation advice and fruit measuring. I also manage some of our major projects, working with the likes of Zespri and Plant and Food Research. The best part about working in horticulture is the balance between office and field work. Every week I am getting out of the office to go and look at a property or meet with a client.
9.4 ‘DIARY OF A GRADUATE KIWIFRUIT TECHNICIAN’

Written by Ben Luke, Zespri

With a last-minute position needing to be filled, I was given the call up to spend two weeks at sea monitoring 1.2 million trays of kiwifruit bound for Japan. With three days’ notice I fervently prepared for the journey. I underwent intensive training with the Zespri team and spent the night before boarding watching ‘Captain Phillips’ to prepare for the worst and to potentially pick up some handy tips if any pirates boarded. Fresh faced, nervous yet excited, I was ready to board the Atlantic Erica on 3 June.

I soon got into the swing of things on board with the Filipino crew, with a typical day beginning by avoiding mysterious goo covered meats or fish for breakfast, and instead chowing down my trusty cereal and milk. After breakfast, I would hike up three flights of steep stairs to the bridge to see the Chief Officer. He would organise one of the crew to accompany me down into the cargo holds and let me know if the conditions were safe enough to collect the fruit for assessment. The monitoring process included collecting a total of 320 pieces of fruit, both green and gold, from eight different libraries which gave me access to four different pallets from four different grower lines. Before being loaded onto the ship, each library was chosen to ensure it was representative of the hold it was in. It’s designed like this so if the temperature in the hold is adjusted based on the monitoring results, the rest of the fruit in the hold should ripen in the same way. The fruit collecting process took me around 50 minutes, which to the crew was probably very slow. It was as if they learnt how to climb ladders before learning how to walk.
I methodically checked the temperature, firmness and brix of the fruit collected which took around seven hours. The crew popped in every now and again to check everything was ok and once I finished testing all the fruit, I filled in my daily log, checked the data, save the file onto a USB stick and took it to the Captain to send back to Zespri New Zealand. The Zespri team in NZ then analysed the results and sent back instructions about any temperature changes to be made in the hold to ensure the fruit doesn’t over ripen or ripen too slowly.

The highlight of my trip included enjoying a day with the crew on the Captain’s birthday. Everyone indulged in a few brews, various meats and took a dip in a self-made pool at the back of the ship. The crew could not have been friendlier to me. Constantly offering me beers, inviting me to watch movies and treating me as if I were one of their own made me feel very welcomed. No communication or sight of land for two weeks was an interesting experience but amazing at the same time. Seeing a log floating in the vast empty ocean half way through the trip even made me excited. I’m not itching to get back on a ship, but it was definitely an experience I will never forget. I certainly have a new-found respect for the team of technicians that come back year after year to spend weeks on end at sea, all to get our fruit to the other side of the world in optimal condition.

“No communication or sight of land for two weeks was an interesting experience but amazing at the same time.”