

**1. The cost of growing kiwifruit is increasing significantly. A major driver of these costs are regulations from local and national Government which are putting Growers under increased financial stress. What will your party do to reduce these costs for growers?**

The RMA is one of the biggest frustrations for farmers. It's led to a patchwork of plans and rules requiring expensive and lengthy consenting processes. Labour has responded with ever more prescriptive standards and policies and is now pushing through a replacement that's even worse: the Natural and Built Environment Bill. Under this bill, the Wellington bureaucracy will set rules, and co-governed Regional Planning Committees will implement them. ACT will repeal the Natural and Built Environment Act and replace the RMA with a new environmental management law that prioritises property rights and local decision-making.

ACT appreciates the concerns of Kiwifruit growers with Hydrogen Cyanamide and the EPA. ACT will replace HSNO with a new risk-based science-based regulatory system for agricultural compounds and chemicals.

**2. Labour: Access to People. Despite investment into automation, a lack of access to seasonal workers means that can't achieve the sustainable growth that our industry needs in areas where automation is currently unavailable. The increasing costs and immigration processes for seasonal workers are causing uncertainty and negatively impacting business confidence. What will your party do to increase access to good people?**

ACT will amend the Employment Relations Act to make it more flexible to employ workers. ACT will immediately repeal the Fair Pay Agreements Act (which will eventually affect the kiwifruit sector). ACT will support the formation of industry training organisations that are genuinely industry-led for skills qualifications and standards for in-work training.

**3. The RSE Policy has been vital in addressing labour shortages in the horticulture and viticulture sectors, but like any policy, there is always room for improvement. How does your party plan to further progress the RSE policy review to ensure it remains relevant, robust, and adaptable to changing dynamics in the labour market, global trends, and industry requirements? Can you highlight specific areas that your party will focus on in terms of amendments or refinements to the existing policy to cater to both the welfare of the seasonal workers as well as the needs of the growers?**

ACT will remove the RSE cap.

**4. In recent times, the availability of proper accommodation for the seasonal workforce (e.g. WHV and New Zealanders relocating for seasonal work) has emerged as a pressing issue, with direct implications on the welfare of the workers as well as the operational capabilities of the growers. How does your party plan to improve access to affordable, safe, and decent**

**accommodation for the seasonal workforce, and consequently, foster a more stable and sustainable working environment in the industry?**

Providing appropriate accommodation for seasonal workers is a matter for the grower. ACT will replace the RMA so growers can build appropriate accommodation more easily.

**5. Significant changes for growers are underway with regional councils working hard to update their freshwater policy and notify their regional policy statements and regional plans by the end of 2024, along with the phased rollout of the freshwater farms. Would your party make any changes to the legislation that is driving these requirements? If so, what would those changes look like?**

ACT understands that New Zealand must manage its water resources sustainably and efficiently. Through Three Waters and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater, Labour has centralised control of water resources, creating costly rules that often don't result in better environmental outcomes. ACT would bring a practical and local approach. We will:

- Give control of water resources back to regional and local councils, allowing them to work with their local communities to develop acceptable standards and rules for nitrates, sedimentation run off, and freshwater quality.
- Stipulate that environmental standards must focus on outcomes based on science (rather than the absurd prescriptive requirements at the moment).
- Liberalise water storage requirements to increase farmer resilience to climate and seasonal pressures whilst maintaining aquifer health.
- Allow councils to opt into a system in which water resource consents would be converted into time-based tradable water permits. This would allow farmers to trade surplus water allocations among each other according to a sensible pricing system.

ACT's approach will allow local bodies, alongside industry, to tailor their water standards, storage, and use across varied catchments. This will ensure environmentally sustainable and profitable production for decades to come.

**6. Can you please share your party's views around the potential to use precision breeding or gene editing to reduce the time taken to find new cultivars?**

ACT will repeal HSNO and bring in a new law to allow for gene editing based on science based assessment of risk.

**7. What is your parties' stance on the RMA reform?**

ACT will immediately repeal the Natural and Built Environments Act, bringing back in the interim the RMA. ACT will replace the RMA with a law that sets out property rights within environmental limits set by the appropriate local body.

**8. What support will your party offer to growers affected (past, present and future) by severe weather events?**

It is a basic duty of Government to provide immediate assistance to victims of storms or floods. A long-term solution is to have local councils be able to provide land owners with realistic risk assessments so the landowners can take steps to manage their risks (such as through appropriate land use or insurance).

**9. How will your party support New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers?**

By building and maintaining the underpinning regulatory systems, including biosecurity, food safety, chemical and compounds use, and environmental, based on property rights, scientific assessment of risk, cost effectiveness and accepting innovation. But ACT does not believe in Government “picking winners” and having political preferred industry subsidies or other schemes.

**10. Does your party support the Single Point of Entry?**

ACT believes that as long as the great majority of kiwifruit growers (noting that 97 percent supported it in the last referendum) support the single desk of Zespri then it will not change the current structure