



**New Zealand
Asparagus
Council**

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September 2017 Update

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2017/18 Levy rate

At the AGM in 2017 the motion was passed that the levy rate for the 2017/18 season be set at \$120 per planted hectare. This motion was ratified at the 2017 SGM.

Commodity Levy Renewal

You will soon receive voting papers for the renewal of the Commodity Levy. This is your chance to vote for or against the continuation of the Commodity Levy. The voting papers will come with a document explaining why we need a Commodity Levy and what the Council intends to spend Levy money on over the next six years.

NZAC Special General Meeting

The AGM held on July 12 2017 was unable to meet quorum. Subsequently a Special General Meeting (SGM) was held on August 9 2017 in Hamilton. There was a productive discussion about the opportunities for the future of the New Zealand Asparagus Council as we move into the levy renewal process.

In 2018 a review of the structure and roles of District Associations, the overall Council, and funding of the New Zealand Asparagus Council will be undertaken, noting that while NZAC goes through the levy renewal application, the way the levy is being collected will remain the same.

This review will allow the Executive to present the growers with a consolidated proposal to keep growers actively engaged and allow for the role of the Council to adapt with the changes in the industry, as the number of growers reduces and the size of growers increases.

Opportunities:

Existing funds will be used to contract a specialist to undertake a full market potential report for both the domestic and export markets. The findings of this report will show the prizes and risks for the future of the industry.

Reporting:

With the 2017 season starting, a simple weekly market report fed by collated data provided by the six largest companies will be presented to the industry to aid ingoing decision making.

Promotion:

Opportunities for joining vegetables.co.nz to perform integrated vegetable promotion will be investigated. Initial conversations with the Business Manager of vegetables.co.nz indicate that process to join is simple: NZAC formally approaches the Chair of vegetables.co.nz. The financial commitment would be proportional to market value.

A social media campaign would be developed using nutrition and food writers to promote asparagus as a premium product.

Communication:

It is proposed that the industry holds three annual meetings for the whole industry rotating geographically through the key asparagus growing regions. This reflects the reducing numbers of asparagus growers in each region and the decreasing role and effectiveness of District Associations. Annual, industry-wide meetings would maximise the opportunities for members of NZAC to meet, and discuss and share ideas about how to keep the Council current, dynamic and effective for its membership.

The above recommendations are provisionally costed as follows. This cost will influence the levy value in the Commodity Levy proposal.

Activity	Provisional costing
Opportunities: Market potential report	\$45000.00
Promotion: Vegetables.co.nz membership	\$3000.00
Social media campaign	\$15000.00
Total	\$63000.00

NZAC Exec workshop

The Executive of NZAC met in Wellington for a workshop on the activity of the Council as we apply for the new Commodity Levy. We recognise the need to make sure that, as the industry changes, the Council adapts to remain dynamic, useful and relevant for its members.

The Executive has identified four key areas for NZAC to focus on. These are: **R&D, Communications, Marketing and Promotion, and the Asparagus Voice.**

Vegetables.co.nz

As part of the marketing and promotion effort of NZAC, we have formally joined vegetables.co.nz. The benefits from this are: featuring as vegetable of the month in October; having a video produced educating how asparagus is grown, packed and produced (featuring Gordon McPhail in South Canterbury); and being featured on the vegetables.co.nz facebook page. They have an audience of over 13,000 people and Pip Duncan who works for vegetables.co.nz works closely with food writers, nutritionists, and schools to promote fresh, New Zealand-grown vegetables. [You can watch the video here.](#)

Dichlorvos Residue Assurance Programme (DRAP)

The registration process for the 2017/18 Export season to Japan has begun. If you are an exporter, or a grower supplying an exporter for Japan, and haven't got your registration forms and the programme yet please contact Eve or your exporter for more information.

Waikato Asparagus Grower Elected Member of Parliament for Waikato

Waikato asparagus grower and first-time National candidate Tim van de Molen has been elected Member of Parliament for Waikato. Tim won the NZ Young Farmer of the Year award in 2013. Tim, Hilary and their family live in Tamahere.

New Zealand Asparagus Council Executive Members

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