



**New Zealand
Asparagus
Council**

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November 2018 Update

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2018/19 season levy

Invoices for levy for the 2018/19 season were sent out in September, based on the levy set during the AGM of \$120 per planted hectare (excl. GST). This season we have asked for information on the production block including age and hectares. This is to ensure the information we have is up-to-date and help us to keep you informed. The invoices are due for payment by **30th November 2018**.

Thanks to those who have returned their forms. If you have any queries on the invoice please contact us.

Season update

Most growing regions reported mid October-early November as their biggest asparagus production period, with yields reducing to <70% following the initial flush. However with good moisture levels currently if the weather warms again we may have another flush for the season taking it through to early-mid December in some regions.

Growers have reported with recent colder weather they have been picking every second day (whilst demand down).

Canterbury growers are reporting a standard season although volume was slightly slow to begin than usual.

Concern has been raised about potential substitution of asparagus with other low priced veg/fruit with low broccoli and lettuce pricing (under \$1 retail) along with the impact of high fuel prices impacting household budgets. Whilst household statistics have yet to be released confirming this, it's important we continue to promote supply in the local market hard now.

Supermarket asparagus promotions have been strong with retailers very active on television and in print, with several promotions on currently.

Exports

The export programme to Japan got off to a slow start this season however the outlook is for a good export year with strong interest from Japan timing well with Australian production being reported as lower. This coupled with a strong exchange rate provides improved conditions for exporters.

Building a strong export programme for New Zealand asparagus is critical to our success as an industry. Earlier this month NZAC sent out a note encouraging exporters to develop robust programmes now to help to maintain a good local market and increase our value as an industry.

With the peak growing period now behind us, we encourage all exporters to continue to build their export programmes and develop on going relationships with key markets for future years.

If any growers would like further information the DRAP programme to Japan, or information on other requirements, please contact us.

Promotion

Early November NZAC did a media release aimed at encouraging asparagus consumption. This was picked up by Newshub on Duncan Garner's AM Show and Mike Arnold spoke to Rural News on Radio NZ:

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/rural/2018/11/asparagus-on-a-roll-as-harvesting-continues.html>

<https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ruralnews/audio/2018669919/morning-rural-news-for-6-november-2018>

Asparagus promotions through vegetables.co.nz have included promotion of the growing asparagus video on YouTube and several facebook posts sharing a range of asparagus recipes on their [page](#), which has over 16,000 followers.



[Bite](#) website and newsletter has featured some great asparagus recipes recently including:

<http://www.bite.co.nz/recipe/9942/Salmon-and-asparagus-lunch-wraps/>

<http://www.bite.co.nz/recipe/13612/Asparagus-bowls-with-herb-broth/>

<http://www.bite.co.nz/recipe/17159/Panfried-fish-with-potatoes-chervil-butter-and-asparagus/>



One of vegetables.co.nz key projects is ‘Easy meals with vegetables’, a partnership with the Health Promotion Agency and the Heart Foundation designed to increase vegetable consumption. Recently the project launched an [A4 asparagus recipe card](#) and we are currently posting copies of the card to all members for you to share with your local retailers. The cards explain basic storage and preparation information along with an easy to make recipe on the back. If you haven’t received the cards by 16th November please contact Karen.

Mike Arnold joined the movers and shakers of New Zealand’s food writing space last month, promoting fresh asparagus at the Food Writers New Zealand conference held in Auckland. Along with other growers, Mike helped to man the vegetables.co.nz stand which provided the opportunity to meet several key writers and bloggers. They enjoyed delicious fresh asparagus on display and learning more about how the crop is grown and harvest. Check out this post from Food Writers NZ facebook page.



Mike has also sent asparagus to several influencers over the last month through the 5 plus a-day campaign. 5+a day are currently promoting asparagus as their Product of the Month in November, a similar campaign to what was done last year. Check out the banner on their [facebook page](#)! We’ll update you with feedback from this campaign as it becomes available.

HortNZ’s growers of NZ posted a great asparagus recipe last week in their Instagram last week – [check it out here](#) – yummo!

NZ Grower November edition

Asparagus in all its glory made the perfect cover shoot in November’s publication of the NZ Grower magazine. Boyd’s Asparagus talked about their asparagus production near Cambridge and challenges facing the industry in an article on pages 8-11 of the magazine.

If you don’t receive the Grower and would like a copy of this edition, contact Karen to have one posted out to you.



Upcoming meetings

We plan for the NZAC executive to meet as follows:

- 25 January 2019 NZAC executive committee strategy session in Wellington
- Early May – timing and venue TBC
- NZAC conference & AGM to be held during HortNZ conference 31/7 - 2/8, Mystery Creek, Hamilton – all welcome! SAVE THE DATE.

If you have any suggestions or feedback please contact Karen

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