



New Zealand

ASPARAGUS COUNCIL

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January 2020 Update

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Summary on the season

South West North Island:

Mangaweka - Can't complain with season overall. Yields about average however average price up fortunately.

Quality very good throughout season.

Weed control still an ongoing issue with alternative methods being looked at.

RSE labour continues to be very valuable for reliable daily harvesting of crop with more kiwis now on board for other roles.

Fern season looking positive due to dryer weather- no disease.

Levin – Horowhenua finished the season about 25-30% down on where we expected production to be in our season planning but returns were higher than budget.

December was the most difficult month to market the asparagus with demand being very poor – would have been useful to have been exporting at that point but in Oct and Nov we had no surplus volume for export customers. We had 100mm of rain in December and so we have been very fortunate that the fern has had a great start. Fingers crossed we continue to get good conditions through summer and into autumn.

Hawkes Bay:

Season finished in early December for most growers. Growers reported good support technically and operationally from NZG.

Waikato:

Waikato region yields similar to last year. Growers in general happy with season, with ok farmgate returns. Labour a key issue for the area.

South Island:

Production/ Quality: South Island asparagus season ended with good supply and quality right up until Christmas. Season volume estimates were achieved.

Late displays pre-Christmas in North Island stores extremely poor quality. Currently there is late produced product in South Island stores from North Island looking good.

Growing conditions since close up have been perfect for fern growth. The season is now becoming very dry and irrigation is required.

Labour: Labour harder to hold onto late season as summer fruit season begins.

Marketing: Feedback on the advertising on TV (from both large retailers) has been that it was really good. I think we should be very thankful for this and encourage the continuation in the future.

Asparagus in the media

<https://www.freshplaza.com/article/9177839/there-will-always-be-room-for-early-asparagus-on-the-market/>

Promotion

5+A Day provided a report on the asparagus promotional campaign they run for NZAC during September to November. Key highlights from the campaign which featured **'5 ways with asparagus'** to showcase its versatility, convenience and health benefits, included:

- A spring superfoods promotion with 33 social media posts, reaching 265,426 people and gaining 1,719 engagements.
- 'We love asparagus' cards and packs of fresh asparagus sent to food writers and influencers resulting in 14 posts, a reach of 1,240,992 and 582 engagements.
- During November, NZME run a radio adlet on their radio stations saying "Asparagus is in season now, it's a superfood you can add to breakfast, lunch and dinner – follow 5adaynz on social to find out how".
- 5+A Day have over 47,000 followers on facebook which they used to share and promote photos, recipes and serving suggestions for NZ asparagus, reaching over 139,000 Kiwis.

If you'd like to see the full report please contact Karen to arrange this. A review of the season's overall promotional campaign that NZAC invested in will be shared following the late February board meeting.

NZAC has also recently had the health claims on New Zealand grown fresh asparagus updated by Plant and Food Research and will publish this information for growers shortly. This information will be used for promotion of asparagus during the 2020 season.

Asparagus Commodity Levy 2019 /20

The final date for levy payment for the 2019 season under the Commodity Levy order is 28th February 2020. The levy rate is \$120 per planted hectare (excl. GST). Along with the invoice we are asking for information on the production block including age and hectares, and number of people you employ to help with providing aggregated industry information and forecasting.

Thanks to those growers who have paid their invoice and provided their information already – we greatly appreciate this. If you have any queries on the invoice please [contact us](#).

NZAC are working on a dashboard display to share of key levy spending areas currently.

Upcoming meetings

The NZAC board had a teleconference/video meeting late November which covered the following areas:

- Feedback from grower visits.
- Feedback and update on asparagus promotions.
- Review of the NZAC business plan.
- Farm environment plans.
- Development of material for growers and retailers.
- Export market overview and considerations for export opportunities.

The next NZAC executive committee meeting will be held **25th February 2020** and we're looking at holding the annual AGM and conference in June 2020 in the Hawkes Bay.

More information will be shared in late February following this meeting including an update on development farm environment plans for asparagus growers, and other planned activities.

If you have any feedback and content suggestions for the newsletter or meetings please contact [Karen](#) or a member of the Executive team.

New Zealand Asparagus Council Executive Members 2019/20

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