



New Zealand

ASPARAGUS COUNCIL

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Covid-19 Alert Levels

Horticulture New Zealand is providing an information source for horticulture industry specific Covid-19 updates and information. All horticulture information will be [available here](#). If you would like to receive updates to your email – [subscribe to the HortNZ Newsletter here](#).

MPI also have up-to-date information on Covid-19 advice for horticulture – [click here to access their webpage](#). MPI have published an updated science opinion on the unlikely transmission of Covid-19 by food or food packaging. You can read this here: <https://mailchi.mp/640e495b1094/covid-19-update-new-zealand-food-safety-scientific-opinion-on-covid-19-transmission-through-food?e=637710222e>

Another good source of information is [United Fresh](#). They have provided some useful guides for managing workplaces under level 2 & 3, along with posters that can be downloaded for printing including hand-washing and social distancing at work. These are all available to download on this webpage: <https://www.unitedfresh.co.nz/technical-advisory-group/covid-19>

All businesses must display an NZ COVID Tracer QR code. This is in addition to any other sign in protocols that you may have on your sites. [Click here](#) to get your QR code poster.

You will need your NZ Business Number and an NZ drivers licence to complete the application. You will need to create a separate poster for each of your sites or unique locations but can print as many copies of each poster as you need. Posters should be displayed in prominent locations next to EVERY site entrance. Place them where it easy for people to reach them to scan the code without creating an obstruction.

You should also have a contact tracing register at your business for people who cannot use the NZ COVID Tracer app.

- [Contact tracing register — non-retail business](#)

- [Contact tracing register — retail business](#)

[Click here](#) for more free COVID-19 posters for your workplace.

If you have specific questions or would like more information please contact [Karen](#) on 04 494 9984.

[Farm environment plan workshop and 2020 AGM](#)

Seventeen asparagus growers attended the one day workshop on Farm Environment Plans in Taupo on Friday 7th August 2020 prior to our AGM. This group represented over 90% of the declared planted hectares of asparagus in NZ, paving the way for New Zealand grown asparagus to lead good management practice on their farms through using the farm environment planning system.



Comments from growers who attended the workshop were positive, with feedback on receiving face to face advice for completing the templates seen as useful, along with having the opportunity to talk through topics with the group.

Prior to the AGM, Mike Chapman joined to update growers on the current situation with supply of labour. He talked about the RSE workers currently in the country, work taking place with Immigration on visa extensions and managing potential shortfalls for the upcoming season.

Following this, Mike Arnold, opened the New Zealand Asparagus Council's 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM). He presented to over twenty-five growers and associates on the activities the Council has been involved in over the past year, along with plans for the upcoming season. Key activities include expanding on the successful promotions campaign initiated by the Council last season with 'In Season, NZ Grown Asparagus'. A new campaign will start in mid-September and run through to early December with the involvement of 5+ A Day and social media specialists, Digital Café. The main promotional activity period will be Labour weekend – mid December.

Other initiatives include recommencement of variety trials with seedlings being planted this season. Further information on these will be provided to growers as the trial work gets underway.

Karen provided the financials and budget, and also talked through the NZAC strategy, which was updated during 2019. A copy of the strategy is attached with this newsletter. Feedback on this is welcomed from all growers.

It was Mike Arnold's last AGM as Chairman, with Mangaweka Asparagus' Sam Rainey successfully elected as the new Chair at the AGM. We would like to thank Mike for his leadership and support, and welcome Sam who has been involved with the executive as South West North Island District representative for the past four years.



NZAC would also like to recognise Lindsay Kay for his long-term involvement representing Hawkes Bay asparagus growers on the Executive. Tony Rickman provided thanks to Lindsay at the AGM and we all wish Lindsay and Jan well, and thank them for all the work they have put in over the years. We welcome Iain Trotter from Wineberry Farm, who took over from Lindsay as Hawkes Bay District representative at the AGM.

After the AGM concluded a large group descended on Lonestar Taupo and enjoyed a filling meal with a lot of hearty banter. It was great to catch up with so many growers and associates together during the evening.

If you would like to receive the AGM papers again, or would like any information on NZAC activities, please contact [Karen](#).

Asparagus harvester project

At the conclusion of the AGM, Dr Shen Hin Lim from the University of Waikato updated growers on



development of the robotic asparagus harvester. Hin and his team, along with Robotics Plus, are developing version 1.5 of the harvester with the aim of improving spear cutting. The latest version is three times faster than the first harvester and trials are planned at Boyds Asparagus in the Waikato in September. The team plan to be able to demonstrate it by the end of October, so watch this space for more on this exciting development.

Labour

Thank you to those employers who completed the HortNZ labour survey provided recently. The issue that both Government (Immigration and MSD) and industry face is the uncertainty as to how many New Zealanders will be available and willing to work in horticulture, and how much movement there will be across the border. Therefore, the Government has announced this week that it is extending Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) visas by six months, allowing these workers to stay and work in New Zealand. The extension will take effect from 18 August 2020 and will apply to all RSE workers whose visas are expiring between 18 August and 31 December 2020. RSE workers who wish to continue to work in NZ for the same purpose after this additional six months will also be able to apply to stay longer. The requirement to return to their home country between seasons has been lifted in light of Covid travel restrictions.

Work the Seasons website

A webpage has been developed for the employment of RSE workers who have not been able to get home. Employers can connect using private chat on the [Work the Seasons Platform](#). To use the Employer chat the following instructions are provided.

Adding your number of available RSE workers to your Company Profile

All Employers will be able to add the number of RSE workers they have available to their Company profile. If you are wanting to redeploy your workers, this is the best way to be seen by other Employers who need to employ your workers.

You can add your worker numbers by logging in to Work the Seasons and doing the following.

1. Navigate to your Company Profile
2. Add the number of workers you have for the months provided
3. Save Changes

If you are looking for workers, you can search the database for Employers who have workers available:

1. Navigate to RSE Redeployment
2. Enter any search criteria that is relevant
3. Enter how many workers you need and for which months.

The search results will display a list of Employers, who can be interacted with by selecting "Chat". If another Employer sends you a message, you will receive an email notification regarding the message. This way, they won't be missed. You can access your messages by logging into Work the Seasons, and selecting the "chat" tab available on the sidebar. If you have any questions, feel free to contact help@worktheseasons.co.nz.

Primary ITO new initiative – PIPI – Pathways into Primary Industries

Primary ITO are rolling out a new initiative to target bringing new people into the primary industry sectors, extending vocational training for sectors such as horticulture. Download a document to read more on this by [clicking here](#). If you would like to find out more details contact Adam Fleck, Horticulture Sector Manger, 027 500 9630 or email: adam.fleck@primaryito.ac.nz.

Horticulture New Zealand Director Elections – voting open until 9 Sept

Voting is open for the Horticulture New Zealand Director Elections for 2020. Six candidates are standing for the three vacancies on the Horticulture New Zealand Board of Directors. The candidates are:

- Pierre Gargiulo
- Tony Howey
- Louise Peters
- Hugh Ritchie
- Kate Trufitt
- Duane Wells

All active grower members should have received voting packs either via post or by email. These packs include the candidates' profiles, information and voting papers. Votes can be cast in one of two ways: e-vote or postal vote. Voters will be able to vote for a maximum of three candidates. Voting is based on a first-past-the-post system so the three candidates with the most votes will be elected. The election is being run by independent election management company [electionz](#).

Each candidates' profile and video are now available [here](#). Voting will close at 12 noon on Wednesday 9 September 2020. If you do not receive an email or voting pack by Friday 21 August, please call the Election Helpline 0800 666 040. The results will be announced at the [HortNZ AGM](#) on Friday 25 September 2020.

Horticulture New Zealand AGM

The Annual General Meetings (AGM) for Horticulture New Zealand will be held at the Pukekohe Indian Centre on 25 September 2020. A zoom option is also available and can be selected via the registration website. [Click here](#) to register for the AGM.

Aspire Asparagus App

Some growers may not be aware that many years back, following field work and crop modelling, a phone app was developed to measure the carbohydrate content in asparagus root system to help monitor fern growth and spear harvest duration.

Currently there are 5-6 regular active users in of the app in NZ, and more overseas. Feedback on using the app is it helps to provide good discipline with field workers.

If you are interested in using the app it can be downloaded by searching for 'aspire asparagus lite' on your phone or tablet in Google play store. If you have difficulties with downloading or using it, please [contact us](#).

New Zealand Asparagus Council Executive Members 2020/21

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