



New Zealand

**ASPARAGUS COUNCIL**

PO Box 10232  
The Terrace  
Wellington 6143  
Ph: 04 494 9984  
karen.orr@hortnz.co.nz

## December 2020 Update

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### Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas from Sam Rainey and the Executive at NZAC. We hope you're able to enjoy time with family and friends for Christmas, and that 2021 will be prosperous!

### Season update

Brief update from some of the regions on the season:

Manawatu: Finally, some settled weather in our region. Bit late to make up ground with yields still around 15% back.

Good to see values recover in December however demand still soft.

Overall challenging season with yields back for the region on top of higher labour costs and a lower average price.

Hawkes Bay: With the end of another season it seems that returns are overall up a little on last year but expenses (wages) have increased also.

An extremely wet season has finished with the weather becoming settled and hot. No rainfall since closing the blocks up means they are going to remain very clean throughout the rest of summer. All in all, a good end to a long season.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2021

## Asparagus harvester project

Recently the developers of the robotic harvester, Robotics Plus and Waikato University, have presented to MPI in a bid for funding support towards the commercialisation of the harvester. They were joined by grower Geoff Lewis who talked about the current situation for asparagus growers and the future outlook.

Whilst there is still a bit of work to be done this bid is looking very promising. MPI are keen to understand the value behind this project from the growers/NZ Asparagus Industry perspective. For this we are aiming to run a meeting by video conference in mid-January to talk with growers about solutions for the sector to get back on its feet to trade competitively internationally. If you would like to be involved in this meeting or have any comments please contact Karen, Geoff Lewis or Sam Rainey.

## Promotion



5+ A Day have provided a report on the promotional work they have undertaken on asparagus this season. You can download a copy by [clicking HERE](#), or contact Karen.

We will provide a review on the full promotions campaign in our January newsletter.

## Asparagus Commodity Levy

Levy invoices for the 2020/21 season were sent out late September at a levy rate of \$120 per planted hectare (excl. GST). There were due for payment by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

Thanks to those growers who have paid their invoice and provided their information already, and a gentle reminder to those growers who haven't done this yet to please return the information as soon possible along with your levy payment. If you have any queries on the invoice please [contact us](#).

## Agri Women's Development Trust



### **Registrations open for the 2021 Agri Women's Development course**

The horticulture sector needs change-makers – women ready to make a positive difference for the people and places they love. Run by Agri Women's Development Trust, Next Level is a six-month leadership and governance development programme empowering you to make

a positive impact in your world. Registrations are open - the first step on your journey to understanding your 'why' and building the mindset and skills to make change happen. Learn more and enrol at [www.awdt.org.nz/programmes/next-level/](http://www.awdt.org.nz/programmes/next-level/).

### **Overseas driver licence holders**

The eligibility period for driving in New Zealand on an overseas driver licence has been temporarily extended to allow people to drive on an overseas licence for up to 24 months.

For further information on this please refer to:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/factsheets/81/81-Overseas-licence-extension.pdf>

### **Visa Conditions**

Earlier this week, Immigration announced several visa changes, including a six month extension to Working Holiday visas. Anyone on a Working Holiday visa can now work in any job without restrictions, and won't have to change their visa to an SSE visa.

This change opens the door to up to 13,000 Working Holiday visa holders to the industry but means that they can work in *any* industry, meaning there will be high demand for these workers.

There are approximately 2100 overseas workers who have already transferred to an SSE visa who will remain on the SSE visa. These visa holders can only work in horticulture and viticulture roles, meaning that these employers who have vacancies on the [MSD regions and roles list](#) can employ SSE visa holders. Additionally, any SSE registered employers can still employ SSE visa holders for approved horticulture and viticulture roles.

People who aren't on Working Holiday visas (with non-open work rights visas like visitors, employer assisted work visas or students) who are reaching the end of their visa and want to be able to work in New Zealand will still have to apply for an SSE.

More information is available here: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/comprehensive-visa-changes-allow-onshore-migrants-help-fill-labour-shortages>

### **Crop protection product potential shipment delays**

With shipment delays in some areas we thought it was worthwhile sharing this information on the situation from AGCARM:

#### **The situation**

- Wharf strikes in Australia delaying shipments.
- Whilst there were some modest delays in manufacturing and shipping, most goods arriving in good time. However recently shipping delays have become more

significant – up to double. A recent example is delays from England / Europe of ~2 months.

- Delays at Lyttelton port - they now have wind restrictions for unloading containers onto the wharf.
- Not affecting all products. Companies are working to minimise impact on growers due to other options being available.
- Auckland port now implementing additional congestion charge.
- In some cases every second ship due to NZ is cancelled. In general supply from factories is not an issue - it is the shipping lines.

### **What actions are being taken?**

There are a number of actions taking place including:

- Prioritisation of orders, making sure the most important products coming in for Summer / Autumn.
- Seeking alternative solutions to get freight moving + pulling orders forward.
- Proactive purchasing arrangements / talking to shipping lines in advance to get bookings to meet cut offs.
- Companies continue to leverage multi-sourcing capabilities to mitigate risks to the supply chain.
- Airfreight and goods of all sorts including personal shipments have increased dramatically with returning citizens moving items back to NZ. Although this may not seem relevant, the more need for shipping there is to NZ and as the AU Port strikes ease the more vessels should make it to NZ.

### **Key outcomes expected**

- Supply of some key lines could prove challenging - we recommend sitting down now and looking at coming months requirements to ensure needs are covered
- Alternatives are available, but possibly not growers preferred brand – they should check with their supplier
- Prices will be affected as cost of goods and global freight continue to increase due to blank sailings.
- Overall, globally and locally the industry remains in a sound position with supply chains performing at full capacity, and companies continue to leverage multi-sourcing capabilities to mitigate risks to the supply chain.

### **News**

The latest Situation and Outlook for Primary Industries has been published – use this link to read it:

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/43345-Situation-and-Outlook-for-Primary-Industries-SOPI-December-2020>

## New Zealand Asparagus Council Executive Members 2020/21

The next NZAC Executive meeting will be 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 in Cambridge. If you're interested in knowing more about this or have items to raise please contact Karen, Sam or your District Rep.

### Waikato

Tony Rickman  
108 Hautapu Road  
Cambridge 3434  
M : 0211513914  
E : [tony@asparagus.co.nz](mailto:tony@asparagus.co.nz)

### Hawkes Bay

Iain Trotter  
2 Nicoll Road  
RD 5, Hastings  
P: 021 081 96849  
E: [asparagushb@gmail.com](mailto:asparagushb@gmail.com)

### South West North Island

Sam Rainey (Chair)  
1235 Kawhatau Valley Road  
Mangaweka 4797  
P: 06 382 5588  
E: [sam@mangaweka-asparagus.co.nz](mailto:sam@mangaweka-asparagus.co.nz)

### South Island

Mike Arnold  
416 Chertsey Road  
RD 2  
Ashburton  
P: 03 302 2897  
E: [mike@lbsi.co.nz](mailto:mike@lbsi.co.nz)

### Co-opted Member

Cam Lewis  
Lewis Farming Ltd (Tendertips)  
747 State Highway 1  
Levin 5572  
P: 06 368 3957  
Mobile: 027 212 1670  
E: [cam@tendertips.co.nz](mailto:cam@tendertips.co.nz)

### Domestic Market Representative

Marcus Turner  
Fresh Direct Ltd  
PO Box 17 470  
Auckland 1546  
P: 09 573 4100  
E: [mturner@freshdirect.co.nz](mailto:mturner@freshdirect.co.nz)

### Post harvest representative

Andrew Body  
MG Marketing  
1 Mihaere Drive  
Palmerston North 4414  
P: 021 717 254  
E: [abody@mgmarketing.co.nz](mailto:abody@mgmarketing.co.nz)

### Business Manager

Karen Orr  
Horticulture New Zealand  
P O Box 10232  
The Terrace, Wellington 6143  
P: 04 494 9984  
Mobile: 021 926 890  
E: [karen.orr@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:karen.orr@hortnz.co.nz)