



Election manifesto for horticulture 2017

Horticulture New Zealand's **five priorities** in our election manifesto 2017 meet our **vision**:

Healthy food for all forever

our **mission**:

Creating an enduring environment where growers prosper

and our **purpose**:

Enabling, promoting and advocating for growers in New Zealand to achieve the industry goal (currently \$10 billion industry by 2020)

Horticulture is a significant contributor to New Zealand's economic wellbeing as a **\$5.6 billion dollar industry** (\$3.4 billion fruit and vegetable exports to 124 countries, and New Zealanders eat \$2.2 billion worth).

5,500 commercial fruit and vegetable growers farm 127,160 hectares and **provide 60,000 jobs**. Successful, inter-generational family businesses provide safe, healthy food for everybody, every day. They use sustainable, environmentally sound production practices that look after the land for the future.

And horticulture is growing, fast. Export value for the two year period from 2014 grew 40 percent. The world loves what we grow.

To continue to grow, and contribute all the benefits that brings to New Zealand, we have **five priorities** we would like the next Government to address.

These are:

- Biosecurity – partnership and commitment for both border control and preparedness

- Food security – a national policy to protect access to land and water
- Workforce capability – education and immigration delivering skilled people
- Mandatory Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL) for fruit and vegetables in law
- Healthy eating education – all Year 7 and 8 students able to cook a healthy meal.

1. Biosecurity

Biosecurity is consistently listed as **the number one concern for our growers**. As a country heavily reliant on primary industries, a devastating pest or disease could have an enormous impact on both individual businesses, families, communities, food supply, and New Zealand's economic wellbeing. In horticulture we have seen this with Psa, which ravaged Bay of Plenty kiwifruit orchards in 2010 and is still costing growers today. We need Government partnership and commitment for both appropriate border control and preparedness for potential incursions.

2. Food security



Horticulture is unique. Growing land tends to be close to urban areas – for ease of getting fresh food to consumers in New Zealand and around the world. We have pockets of land rare in the world, including Pukekohe (near Auckland) and surrounding areas, where soil and climate allow year-round growing of leafy green vegetables. We need to protect this land for affordable, year-round food production. And we need sensible access to water, without which no food grows.

Our most valuable growing land is under threat from houses. While we understand New Zealand's growing population needs houses and that the fastest growing population is in Auckland, we want Government to pause and think: *How are we going to feed the people in those houses?* Horticulture New Zealand is advocating for a food security policy to balance the needs of rapidly growing urban areas, with the food bowls on their outskirts. The less growing land and the further away it is, the more expensive healthy food becomes.

Decisions made by local government about land and water use in one area can in fact, impact food supply for the whole country, as well as valuable exports that contribute so much to our economy. As part of a food security policy, we believe there is a need for central Government to be able to consider national good, via a National Environmental Standard, to **protect access to land and water for primary producers.**

3. Workforce capability

Horticulture is growing faster than the pool of skilled labour. Horticulture participates in numerous schemes to get New Zealanders into work, including people leaving prisons. We focus on attracting and upskilling New Zealanders first and we need the education system to be part of delivering people with the right skills for employment. Where we cannot find skilled workers, we support immigration policies focused

on supplying those workers, particularly in big horticulture regions outside Auckland. We also require support for schemes to supply **seasonal labour during peak harvest and pruning times**, including the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, widely acknowledged as one of the most successful labour mobility schemes in the world. Benefits are two-way – to the employers and communities in New Zealand that get seasonal workers from the Pacific Islands, and to the workers from the Pacific Islands who take home useful skills when their work season in New Zealand is complete.

4. Country of Origin Labelling (CoOL)

An independent Consumer NZ survey showed that 71% of New Zealanders want mandatory CoOL for fresh fruit and vegetables. The Consumers' Right to Know (Country of Origin of Food) Bill has had its first reading in Parliament and is under consideration by Parliamentary Select Committee. We want to see this Bill progress into law because **people have a right to know where their food comes from.**

5. Healthy eating education

Understanding the value of healthy food for positive lifelong health outcomes needs to start young. Research supported by vegetables.co.nz (carried out by Massey University and the Heart Foundation) shows a gap in the food programmes taught to Year 7 and 8 students in New Zealand schools – they are not consistently taught **how to cook a healthy meal.** Developing the ability to prepare healthy meals will empower our children and young people to be able to access and enjoy a nutritious diet within their budgetary, cultural, social and time constraints, over a lifetime. The school curriculum is the most appropriate place to teach and develop cooking literacy skills as it reaches all children and provides cross-cultural learning. We want the Government to support healthy eating education through the curriculum.

