SUBMISSION ON
Occupation Classification

6 August 2024

To: Statistics New Zealand
Name of Submitter: Horticulture New Zealand

Contact for Service:

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Horticulture™
New Zealand
Ahumāra Kai Aotearoa

HortNZ's Role
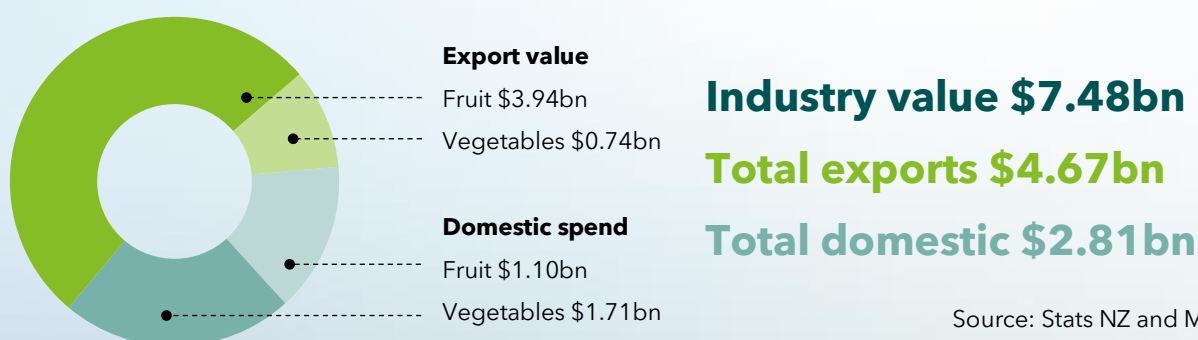
Background to HortNZ

HortNZ represents the interests of approximately 4,200 commercial fruit and vegetable growers in New Zealand who grow around 100 different fruits and vegetables. The horticultural sector provides over 40,000 jobs.

There are approximately 80,000 hectares of land in New Zealand producing fruit and vegetables for domestic consumers and supplying our global trading partners with high quality food.

It is not just the direct economic benefits associated with horticultural production that are important. Horticulture production provides a platform for long term prosperity for communities, supports the growth of knowledge-intensive agri-tech and suppliers along the supply chain; and plays a key role in helping to achieve New Zealand's climate change objectives.

The horticulture sector plays an important role in food security for New Zealanders. Over 80% of vegetables grown are for the domestic market and many varieties of fruits are grown to serve the domestic market.

HortNZ's purpose is to create an enduring environment where growers prosper. This is done through enabling, promoting and advocating for growers in New Zealand.

Export value
Fruit $3.94bn
Vegetables $0.74bn

Domestic spend
Fruit $1.10bn
Vegetables $1.71bn

Industry value $7.48bn
Total exports $4.67bn
Total domestic $2.81bn

Source: Stats NZ and MPI

Submission

Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ) thanks Statistics New Zealand for the opportunity to submit on the future of occupation classifications in New Zealand and welcomes any opportunity to continue to work with Statistics New Zealand.

HortNZ understands Statistics New Zealand is seeking feedback on two parts of this consultation:

Part A: Options for an updated occupation classification and our intention to introduce separate but aligned occupation classifications for New Zealand and Australia

Part B: Implementation considerations, concerns, and mitigations.

HortNZ also understands there will be an opportunity to provide input into individual occupation codes at a later time.

Part A Options for an updated occupation classification

The consultation documents sets out four options for submitters to consider:

Option 1: Create an independent New Zealand occupation classification that leverages existing content

Option 2: Adopt the Australian revision of ANZSCO v1.3

Option 3: Adapt the Australian revision of ANZSCO v1.3 to reflect New Zealand content in a joint classification

Option 4: Update the current version of ANZSCO v1.3 for New Zealand-only classification

HortNZ understands that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has undertaken three consultations on the review of Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) since 2022 and has an open consultation relating to classification codes which closes in September. Updates from these consultations have been undertaken in respect of the Australian labour market only and has not considered changes in the New Zealand labour market.

While both labour markets will have aligned occupations, this won't be consistent across all occupations and having an independent framework that supports this makes sense. HortNZ understands from Statistics New Zealand that the Australian Bureau of Statistics support the preferred approach by Statistics New Zealand which is to create an independent New Zealand occupation classification.

HortNZ agrees with this approach and supports Option 1

We expect this will enable the new data set to reflect the unique characteristics of the New Zealand market, and in turn enable nuanced analysis and workforce planning.

Part B Implementation considerations, concerns, and mitigations

HortNZ supports the intention to achieve efficiencies through leveraging off existing content and platforms

Under Option 1, it is proposed that Statistics New Zealand is actively exploring a new approach that leverages the work done by Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in developing their new online careers solution platform – Tahatū (a replacement to careers.govt.nz). The consultation information notes the aim to link occupations in the updated occupation classification to the content and information on Tahatū and suggests the systems will be integrated.

However, we understand that the link to Tahatū is one-off – with no agreement for an ongoing link (or API) between the systems. Alongside this, both tools intend to engage with industry and refine their lists over time.

If there is no ongoing link between the systems there are several potential consequences:

- Duplication of information and resources to maintain these lists
- Differences in occupations listed as a result of dual review and update processes; and/or
- User confusion with two (or more) central lists being used.

Recommend: *The implementation of a true integrated approach to harness resource efficiency and minimise potential duplication issues.*

The ongoing and/or flexible update of both the Statistics New Zealand and Tahatū platforms will provide real time accurate data which will be a helpful data set for the horticulture industry – particularly after census data is released. This would provide a more reliable data set of those employed in the horticulture sector in specific roles.

The development of the two systems don't seem to align

It is HortNZ's understanding that Tahatū is still in the pilot phase and not expected to be publicly available until the end 2025. During this time, TEC intends to continue development and consult further with industry to refine the occupation list.

However the consultation information suggests the list will be used by Statistics New Zealand during 2025. Therefore, if the systems are not integrated ongoing, there is a risk that Statistics New Zealand will use a less refined list to inform the new occupation codes, with minimal ability for industry to input into the new occupation list.

Recommend: *The timeline and any implications for system development and data use is clearly articulated.*

HortNZ supports ongoing industry input to refining the occupation classifications

HortNZ supports the intention outlined in Option 1 to have ongoing industry input and ability to add, remove or modify occupations on the list over time. HortNZ presumes there will be additional consultation for industries to provide updated occupation codes as that is not part of this consultation.

Recommend: That Statistics New Zealand clarifies their plans for future industry consultation and advises when this consultation will commence.

Comparability with other data sets needs to be a priority

It is not clear how comparable the new list will be alongside or within other central market analysis tools such as the Household Labour Force Survey or (HLFS), or with international data.

Comparability between data sets enables tailored market and skills analysis, that can then inform workforce planning. We would like to ensure there is a consistency in language, data and methodologies. This in turn will support refinement of market intelligence for growers and industry partners.

Recommend: The design and execution of the new occupation list includes clear articulation of how it relates to other similar data sets and demonstrates how it supports ongoing comparability and long-term analysis.

General Comment

The consultation period is relatively short and HortNZ asks when Statistics New Zealand undertakes consultation on updating the classification codes, a sufficient consultation period is provided.