

News Release
9 November 2009

TURNERS & GROWERS WELCOMES FOCUS ON KIWIFRUIT INNOVATION

Turners & Growers today welcomed the Government's move to ensure innovation in the kiwifruit industry through the development of new varieties, but says the timeframe may be too long and New Zealand growers could miss out on being the Southern Hemisphere's leading growers of the lucrative new varieties that are available now.

Turners & Growers, which named the kiwifruit and developed New Zealand's commercial kiwifruit exports, is calling for an end to Zespri's monopoly status to ensure that New Zealand growers can diversify out of 'the green trap' and be the Southern Hemisphere's leading growers of innovative new varieties.

Turners & Growers has been investing in investigating and developing new varieties for several years and gained international recognition for these new varieties following their showing at the ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA EXPO in Hong Kong in September.

For New Zealand growers the greatest opportunity is in new varieties - 80 percent of the New Zealand crop is made up of Green kiwifruit.

Turners & Growers Chairman, Tony Gibbs says the commercial demand for these new varieties, particularly the ENZA Red, was recently proven in Hong Kong where the Red was described as the most exciting product on show.

Gibbs says it's good to see the Government now pushing Zespri to get on with the development of new varieties after Turners & Growers this year put the spotlight on the lack of innovation under the monopoly structure. "While Government assistance for new varieties will be welcomed, if the market was a free one the innovation would naturally happen. It would happen much faster and the taxpayer wouldn't be picking up the tab.

"Turners & Growers Red is already being grown and sold commercially with well advanced plans for a major commercial planting. Over the next 12 months, Turners & Growers will need to decide the predominant growing region for ENZA Red. Our preference, of course, is to continue to invest and innovate in New Zealand. However, the current monopoly structure means that Turners & Growers must investigate other Southern Hemisphere growing regions where there are no export restrictions and freedom of trade.

"The future of the kiwifruit industry lies in growing the category internationally. International supermarkets want exciting, new varieties that will expand the shelf space that our fruit can demand in the big supermarkets.

"To strengthen the future of the New Zealand kiwifruit industry and secure maximum returns, New Zealand growers need choice in the type of fruit they grow and in who exports them.

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A copy of Turners & Growers briefing paper on its new varieties is attached along with images of the kiwifruit on show at ASIA FRUIT LOGISTICA.

For more information please contact Tony Gibbs on (021) 991 327 or Trish Sherson on 021 570 803.