

March 2025

Have your say on our future

SGNZ is funded by a commodity levy, which growers voted for in 2020. All growers pay \$26 per 1,000 plants to fund our activities. Our Commodity Levies (Strawberries) Order 2020 ends on **31 March 2026**.

Every grower has a vote on whether to continue to have a commodity levy. Any application for a new levy order must be supported in a referendum by over 50 % by value and 50% by number of those who vote.

The Minister who approves any referendum for a commodity levy expects that genuine effort has been made to consult with growers and ***we are starting this process shortly***.

In the meantime, if you have views or ideas you would like considered in the next referendum, please get in touch with your Board Representative - names and contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Specialist plant supplier to commercial growers



Available now:

Monterey plug plants x 10,000.

Order for Summer/Autumn 2026:

Monterey, Moxie & Ventana.

Please contact our Sales Team for more information:

Grant Bryan, 027 4201 003. grant.b@waimea.group

Kate Marshall, 027 4201 033. kate.m@waimea.group



Gene Editing Update

HortNZ has submitted on behalf of the sector regarding this important legislation and will speak before the select committee shortly. There has been really limited time for consultation, and there is concern that the process is being too rushed.

HortNZ's position, which SGNZ supports, talks specifically to the horticulture risks. In a nutshell, it says the release of organisms bred using genetic technologies into the environment has potential benefits for primary industry. But there are also risks to ecosystems, biosecurity, market access and trade. The risks and benefits of such an environmental release will not be borne by the same groups, and therefore, it is important that the regulator is appropriately tasked (and resourced!) to assess and manage these risks and the trade-offs inherent in risk management. You can read HortNZ's submission [here](#)

Just by-the-by, a shout-out to the policy team at HortNZ: the workload right now for changes in all kinds of regulation settings means that SGNZ members are getting great value for our affiliation. It's important to stand together to get a voice with government. If our sector can't advocate collectively for land, water, labour and environmentally sensible regulation, horticulture is destined to be 'taken out' by many interest groups.

Research and the BerryWorld Blog

Have you been reading BerryWorld's updates on issues and research we have underway? Some recent briefings have been on heat, the best planting times for plug plants and myrids. Molly's incredibly valuable blog (funded by SGNZ) is a mine of [information](#).

There is rarely a definitive answer with our research. For example, 'catfacing' was thought to be a myriad issue, but apparently pollination is also a factor. In a current trial, a high level of catfacing early on was due to pollination troubles rather than myrids feeding. More research is needed - we don't know whether the pollination troubles are due to temperature extremes (either hot or cold), or lack of pollen movement.

There is no end to the

As well as myrids we are
Thrips, Botrytis and
Guidelines for growers.
co-funding with wonderful
[Barker's](#) and [A Lighter](#)

And thanks to all those
their sites, time and
our understanding of how

More updates in Molly's
conference this year.



questions....

also funding research on
Updating Nutrient
We are partnering and
supporters such as
[Touch](#).

growers who contribute
resources to help improve
to grow better.

blogs and also at

Strawberry Exports

We did not make the window for Vietnam this year. The process of finalising the OAP was finally signed off in October, much later than anticipated. We continue to progress this market and will keep you updated.

Meanwhile, for those who are interested in Vietnam, you will need to become an MAO - that is an MPI Approved Organisation for export. Becoming an MAO is a big project for any grower, so plan accordingly - please get in touch with Sally for further details.

In better news there has been good interest in Thailand, Taiwan and Dubai for the 25/26 season. Thailand is changing their biosecurity settings and this is a material risk to our exports - we are still working through options with MPI. It should not impact the 25/26 season however.

Conference 2025

Save the date: August 21-22 Auckland

Another fabulous conference is planned - this time the venue is Auckland.

Registrations will open soon for the SGNZ Conference & Field day.

Held over Thursday 21 and Friday 22 August 2025 in Auckland, SGNZ will bring together participants from across the horticultural and covered crop ecosystem, including policy makers, researchers, leaders, innovators and industry participants to share knowledge, exchange ideas and showcase leading edge industry technologies and opportunities.

Venue and Accommodation details will be available soon, but for our sponsors and presenters:

Get Involved!

Elevate Your Brand at Strawberry Growers premier event!

SGNZ has some valuable partnership opportunities available for 2025.

Join us for unmatched exposure and credibility within our Strawberry Sector. The gains are endless, including:

- Thought Leadership: Position your brand as an industry innovator and trusted partner.
- Variety of Packages: Choose a partnership level that fits your goals and budget, from exhibition booths to a keynote opportunity.
- Brand Visibility and Extended Reach: Feature your brand on stage, in workshops, and in our exhibition space to maximise your impact.
- Exclusive Networking: Connect with industry leaders, potential clients, and key decision-makers.

Express interest for Partnership opportunities with Sally on 021 61 85 61.

2024 – 2025 Strawberry Mystery Shopping

Round 5 Summary (10 February 2025)

Strawberry Colour Scale Used

- 1 = Good red colour
- 2 = 1-2 fruit with white/green shoulder
- 3 = 3 or more fruit with white/green shoulder
- 4 = Most fruit with white/green colour

Strawberry Appearance Scale Used

- 1 = Almost perfect
- 2 = 1 - 2 fruit with bruise/blemish
- 3 = 3 or more fruit with bruise/blemish
- 4 = Rots



Colour score av. 1.00

- Good red colour

Appearance score av. 2.40

- 3 Wet bruising found
- Rots and Mould and Soft tips also noted



Brix

- Av. 7.95 (ranged from 5.3– 15.1)
- 22% of berries had brix below 7 (4)
- 78% of berries had brix 7 or above (14)



Weights and Measures

- 100% samples with declared weight (6)
- 1 sample had packed on date.
- Berry Count av. 18 (ranged from 15 – 23)



Sample Traceability

- 100% of samples traceable (6)
- 6 different growers.
- 100% displayed Product of NZ



Average Price \$4.82

(equivalent to 250g)

- (Price Range \$3.99 – \$5.99) for 250g
- No samples had multi-buy deals.



Packaging

- 50% clam shell punnets (3)
- 50% separate lid punnets (3)
- 100% of punnets had barcodes (6)
- All samples were 250g punnets.



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STRAWBERRY
GROWERS NZ

2024 – 2025 Strawberry Mystery Shopping

Round 5 Summary (10 February 2025)



Microbial test results

- 2 samples tested
- Tested for E.coli, Faecal coliforms, Listeria, Salmonella, Staphylococcus.
- All samples were compliant.



Residue test results

- 2 residue samples tested
- All samples were compliant.



Strawberries were generally sold

- 67% Centre Display (4)
- 33% Side Chiller (2)



18 Stores visited, 6 samples collected:

- All samples were purchased in Auckland.
- 4 Supermarket samples
- 2 Specialist store samples

Comments:

- Sampling was completed in Auckland on 10th February. All samples were North Island based growers; 4 Waikato, 1 Auckland and 1 Wellington grower.
- Sampling was also undertaken in Christchurch on 10th February. Several stores were visited but no samples collected as there were no new suppliers and only North Island product was available.
- In total, 7 Supermarkets, 8 Specialist stores and 3 Independent retailers were visited.
- In Auckland, 16 stores were visited and 6 samples were collected. 8 stores had no samples, 3 stores had growers that were sampled in previous rounds.
- It is our observation that a small number of suppliers accounted for the fruit available in Supermarkets and Specialist stores.



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**STRAWBERRY
GROWERS NZ**

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