

Fresh Vegetable Product Group

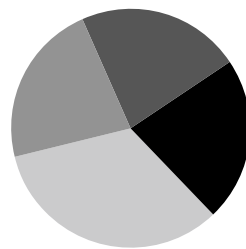
Levy Referendum – November 2006



●●● Our Growth Industry

In November this year you will be asked to vote for the continuation of the compulsory levy on fresh vegetables. The Commodity Levies Act requires that active growers vote on their Levy every six years.

The proposed levy remains at 0.45% or \$45 per \$10,000 of sales (collected at first point of sale) and is to be allocated as shown below.



- PROMOTION \$10
- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT \$10
- PRODUCT GROUP \$10
- HORTICULTURE NZ \$15

Unchanged Total \$45

Note: It is not intended to collect the promotion proportion of the levy on export sales.

There is one change in the allocation compared to the present levy. The amount allocated to Research & Development (R&D) is being increased by 0.25% to 0.1% and the Promotion component reduced by 0.25% to 0.1%. That is significant in that the funds the Product Group will have available for Research & Development will increase by 33%.

Research

In the last 5 years the Fresh Vegetable Product Group has managed to leverage a substantial amount of funding for fresh vegetable research. For example, the Integrated Pest Management projects on Lettuce, Brassicas and Alliums on which the Product Group spent around \$350,000 attracted Government funds in excess of \$1.4M. The recent appointment of a Research & Innovation Manager will give the Product Group even greater leverage.

Over the last five years the Product Group has also completed more than 30 R&D projects as well as undertaking a grower seminar for kumara growers and provided information on Potato Spindle Tuber Viroid (PSTVd) for covered crop growers, on lettuce aphid and on white blister in Brassicas.

Promotion

The Product Group continues its long-standing contribution to the Joint Fresh Product Groups' Promotion activities under the auspices of www.vegetables.co.nz where the Fresh Vegetable, Potato and Fresh Tomato Product Groups source and provide vegetable promotion material to the education, health, food service and retail sectors.

Product Group

The portion of your levy identified for the Product Group is used to fund your Product Group Committee meetings. It is also used for annual conference costs including those of the growers attending Conference, a share of the *Commercial Grower* magazine postage and its annual operating costs, newsletters to growers, communications with media, consulting with government agencies, others within the industry, the website and a share of the relevant staff salaries and office overheads within Horticulture New Zealand. The Product Group has also been active in other areas such as:

- the establishment of the NZ Fresh Produce Quality Assurance Programme
- the restructuring of the Product Group to give growers a direct say in the election of their grower representatives and
- the creation of the six Crop Committees to give greater focus to the work of the Product Group
- the support of a multi-layered education and leadership programme to enhance the skills of our grower base

Horticulture New Zealand

The portion of the levy identified for Horticulture New Zealand is your contribution to 'fighting the grower's cause' – that is, all the generic activities undertaken by Horticulture New Zealand on behalf of all vegetable, fruit, berryfruit and olive growers. This is the industry's pro-active voice with Central and Local Government, dealing with issues such as The Resource Management Act, Regional and District Plans, Environment Standards, Food Safety, Biosecurity, Transport, Labour and a whole raft of other issues and communications with policy-makers, officials and politicians.

What Now?

The only thing that we can be certain of in the future is that change will continue and at a faster pace than in the past. This will put pressure on the Product Group to ensure that growers' interests are well represented in protecting the right to farm and minimising the effect of regulation, whether it be in the domestic or the export markets. As a Fresh Vegetable grower you will not escape whatever changes do take place. The Product Group's role is to help you through those changes with a minimum of trauma.

More information about Horticulture New Zealand, and questions and answers about the levy referendum are contained in the brochure "Horticulture New Zealand Commodity Levy Proposal – Discussion Document", which you should have recently received in the mail. If you have any questions about the work of Horticulture NZ or the Product Group on the referendum, please call any of the Product Group members, the Product Group Business Manager on 0508 467 869 or myself on 06 752 0634.

Vote Yes when the ballot paper arrives, to ensure that we are here to help you in the future.



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Fresh Vegetable Product Group Committee

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