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Horticulture levy votes successful

Horticulture groups seeking levy renewals have all had votes of confidence from growers to continue the work of the industry good organisations Horticulture New Zealand, TomatoesNZ, Vegetables New Zealand, Process Vegetables New Zealand, and Onions New Zealand.

The individual groups' levy referendums closed on 13 August and independent vote counting shows resounding support. The levy orders come up for renewal every six years.

Commodity levy referendum votes are unusual in that the votes are counted in two ways, once on a one-grower-one-vote basis and again on a 'weighted' value basis. There needs to be a majority in both categories to get a mandate to continue the levy.

The results for each referendum are:

One-grower-one-vote, Yes Percent | Weighted value vote, Yes Percent

Horticulture New Zealand: 89.69% | 92.01%

Vegetables New Zealand: 86.55% | 89.05%

Process Vegetables New Zealand: 81.40% | 96.54%

TomatoesNZ: 87.50% | 86.50%

Onions New Zealand: 91.49% | 91.94%

Horticulture New Zealand's levy rate for this year has been set at 14 cents per \$100 sales of fruits and vegetables, and this is expected to raise about \$4.6 million. This is spent on grower representation across areas important to their businesses including biosecurity; access to land, water and people; research and development; education and training; and maintaining quality assurance programmes.

"In the lead up to voting the Board and I visited growers throughout New Zealand and it was great to hear the support for having an industry voice in Wellington, able to represent growers on the big issues of the day," Horticulture New Zealand chief executive Mike Chapman says.

Next steps include application to the Ministry for Primary Industries for a new levy order, consideration of the application by the Agriculture Minister and, if approved, the Minister instructs Parliamentary Counsel to draft a new levy order. A new levy order must be in place before the previous one expires.

The Horticulture New Zealand levy order falls due at the same time as levy orders for Vegetables NZ, Onions NZ, Tomatoes NZ, and Process Vegetables NZ, that is, 12 May 2019.

ENDS

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