

# Huawhenua Vegetables



## Key challenges

- Labour shortages
- Seasonal labour requirements
- Skilled workforce
- Weather events
- Advancements in technologies

## Industry overview

- The Vegetables industry is a fertile place for **innovation in Māori agribusiness**.
- It can be especially **challenging to attract highly skilled people** into the industry.
- **Labour shortages** create challenging conditions for growers.

## Insights

### Industry

- **Wet weather and Cyclone Gabrielle** created significant challenges for the industry in 2023.
- **Export revenue** is experiencing an **increased** trend, but **GDP is expected to continue declining**.

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### Workforce

- The Vegetables industry is **more ethnically diverse and younger** than other Muka Tangata industries.
- The industry **relies heavily on the Recognised Seasonal Employment (RSE) scheme** to supplement the workforce.

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### Learners and Providers

- The industry wants adaptable and flexible learning and training, that supports **transferability of skills across industries**.
- There is a **need for leadership training** to support people to progress into supervisory roles and project management level positions and build leadership skills across the industry.

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## Opportunities

### Diversity and Inclusion

Supporting a multi-cultural workforce is focus of the Vegetable industry.

- The Vegetable industry is the most ethnically diverse industry of the food and fibre sector.
- This diverse workforce will require different needs and approaches when it comes to supporting a culturally diverse workforce and understanding how to best cater for their needs.

### Skills

Entry level roles are perceived as being 'low skilled', but a high level of skill is required in these roles to be productive.

- Labour shortage is an ongoing challenge for the industry, and there are not enough people working in the industry to keep up with the level of work that is required.
- There is high demand for entry-level roles, and limited career progression due to the flat organisational structure of the horticulture industries.

### Non-formal Learning

Non-formal learning is currently being used to support employees to move into leadership roles.

- The pathway into leadership roles is unclear, with not enough skilled leadership staff in the industry.
- There is a need for leadership training to support people to progress into supervisory roles and project management level positions.

### Qualifications

Existing qualifications do not always align with the skills required to do the work and attracting people with the right skills is a challenge.

- While the industry is embracing more advanced technology, the existing qualifications do not necessarily align with these changes.
- It can be a challenge to upskill staff and attract skilled people into roles that require more technological understanding and experience.

## Roadmap Actions

Action

What is the problem?

What are we doing about it?

**Build leadership skills**

The industry has identified a need for short leadership training, including for those leading seasonal worker teams.

We will investigate how these skills can be built, including if leadership training needs to be part of horticulture-specific qualifications or can be delivered through existing general qualifications or micro-credentials.

Action	What is the problem?	What are we doing about it?
<b>Ensure workers have the skills to adapt to changing technology</b>	Technology in the horticultural industries is advancing rapidly.	We are undertaking research to inform how vocational education and training can evolve to ensure that our industries have the skilled workforce required to meet a changing environment, and we will work with these industries to ascertain how best to provide the skills workers need to improve production.
<b>Investigate vocational pathway for agronomist skills</b>	The industry has identified a shortage of agronomists.	These are normally degree-level trained, but there may be options for a vocational pathway. We will investigate how to build these skills.  This action is included in our wider discussions with Vegetables NZ about their own workforce development plan (WDP) which is currently in development. We are supporting them to include a focus on vocational education in their WDP. This will include building agronomy and technology skills.
<b>Support workers to move across the industry and/or industries</b>	It is important that qualifications maximise transferability to allow people in the vegetables workforce to move across the industry / industries.	As part of our work to create a framework, and suite of products that maximises flexibility and transferability, we will explore reviewing and developing qualifications that are transferrable across a variety of industries. For example, it has been suggested that there may be a need for more general skills at level 4 of horticulture qualifications, instead of learners having to choose a strand. This would provide a pathway for learners in regions which are not heavily weighted towards a particular strand to continue study.
<b>Support appropriate delivery models</b>	Industries have indicated that they are looking for delivery that is flexible and that meets their industry's circumstances. In addition, we know that not all learners learn the same way.	Working with industry, learners, and providers, Muka Tangata is exploring and supporting different ways in which learning can meet the diverse needs of learners and employers. This recognises that the vast majority of learning in the sector is carried out on-job. It could include better combinations of on-job and 'classroom' learning; learning closer to where learners live and work; and/or online or computer-based learning. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.

Action

**Support the use of more flexible assessment methods**

What is the problem?

Existing qualifications do not always align with the skills required to do the work and attracting people with the right skills is a challenge. Non-formal learning is currently filling a gap in the qualifications, particularly when it comes to training in areas such as leadership.

What are we doing about it?

Alongside flexible delivery models, Muka Tangata is also supporting providers to use assessment methods that are suitable to a wider range of ākonga (learners). We are exploring whether assessment provisions can allow for multiple and diverse methods of presenting evidence that cater for different learning needs, such as videos, photographs and work evidence. Delivery and Assessment for the 21st Century is a joint project between Muka Tangata, Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence and Te Pūkenga.

**\*Keep up to date with progress on our Workforce Development Plans**

This represents a snapshot in time of the workforce development plan. For the most up to date information, please visit: [mukatangata.workforceskills.nz](https://mukatangata.workforceskills.nz) or [sign up to our mailing list](#) for updates.