Progress report for the period January to March 2021

www.a-lighter-touch.co.nz

A Lighter Touch has completed its first year of operation and, despite the challenges that have been faced, good progress is being made. What is particularly exciting is that we are now moving beyond our baseline studies and planning, to having field trials underway or completed. As these results become available, they will be shared through the programme website.

Achievements from this period include:

- Field trials comparing a range of crop protection products have been completed, and another looking at bacterial diseases of broccoli is about to get underway.
- Observational trials on biological controls for fungal diseases of wheat and four other arable research trials have been completed.
- Four kiwifruit projects in cooperation with Zespri are ongoing, investigating biological controls for Psa (a bacterial disease of kiwifruit vines).
- We now have four major "proof of concept" projects in the planning pipeline and beginning by September 2021. The first project to be underway is likely to be with tomato growers aiming to increase the use of biological controls in greenhouses (photos right and below).
- The 2021-22 Annual Plan has been approved by the Programme Governance Group.

Right: PhD candidate Emiliano Veronesi scouting pests and biological control agents.
Image Credit: Chris Thompson.

Investment Summary:

	Industry Contribution	MPI Contribution	Total Investment
Programme to date	$969,289	$646,159	$1,615,448

Above: The beneficial predator *Engytatus nicotianae*
Image Credit: Chris Cowie.