



In Touch.

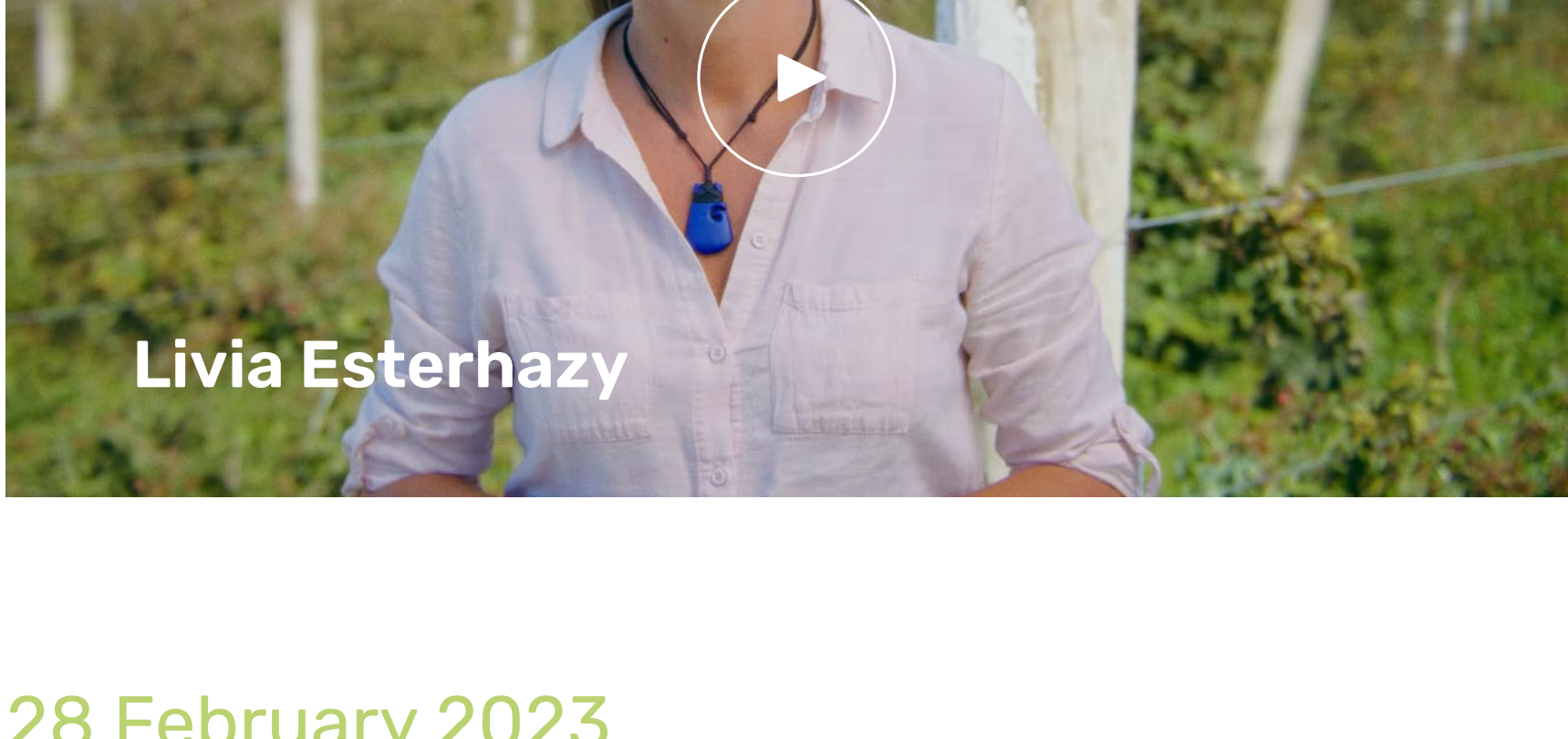
Hello and Kia ora

Welcome to the first edition of the In Touch monthly newsletter. You're receiving this email because you're either connected with us or have shown interest in the A Lighter Touch Programme.

The In Touch monthly newsletter is dedicated to keeping you updated on the A Lighter Touch Programme's progress on agroecology in crop protection here in Aotearoa. Check out my video below to learn more about our programme goals and support for growers in managing crop issues.

This month, we're excited to share some compelling case studies with you, and we look forward to sharing many more in the future, along with international articles and other relevant content. I hope you enjoy this edition of In Touch.

Livia Esterhazy
Programme Director



28 February 2023

This update includes:

- ↓ **Passionvine hopper project**
- ↓ **Wet weather recovery**
- ↓ **Tomato BCA trials**
- ↓ **Citrus beneficial planting**
- ↓ **Upcoming events and workshops**



15
pest and disease projects completed

17
pest and disease projects underway

50
Approximately 50 growers involved in projects

22
Pests and diseases targeted

Project Overview

PassionVine Hopper (PVH)

Passionvine hopper, *Scolytopa australis* (Walker) is the most significant production pest for kiwifruit, costing the industry at least \$77M per annum. In 2021, Zespri and research partner, Plant and Food Research, began a four year on-orchard research programme investigating PVH control with co-funding by A Lighter Touch Programme. The programme aims to develop a comprehensive IPM plan for PVH management by integrating the best of existing management practices with new sustainable tools.

Year 1 key results from shelter and border management survey:

- Increased clearing of border vegetation may reduce numbers of PVH in adjacent kiwifruit.
- Shelter type may influence numbers of PVH (further data needed particularly for artificial shelter).
- Frequency of insecticide application and active ingredient did not appear to affect PVH numbers on the edges of commercial blocks.



Update

Wet weather recovery

The impact of natural disasters can be devastating, and Cyclone Gabrielle is no exception. We've all seen the widespread damage and destruction to our communities, infrastructure, and critically our growers and farmers.

At the A Lighter Touch Programme, we extend our heartfelt sympathies to all the growers who have been affected by Cyclone Gabrielle. We understand the challenges that come with being a grower, and the emotional and financial toll that natural disasters can take.

If you need any support or information, please click here for the latest updates on the HortNZ website.

Project Overview

Tomato potato psyllid (TPP) & Greenhouse Whitefly (GHW)

The goal of this project is to establish a model system that restores an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) solution for protecting greenhouse tomato crops. The project uses arthropod biocontrol agents (BCAs) to control two major economic insect pests. Seven tomato growers of various scales in both the North and South Islands are involved.

As year two of a four-year programme begins, five of the trial glasshouses have so far been populated with BCAs, with two more sites to be added at their next planting round. Bioforce, the project provider, are monitoring the performance of several BCAs across the different sites. The objective is to determine the optimal release rates and timing for each beneficial species and to discover the pros and cons of each BCA.



TomatoesNZ



Project Overview

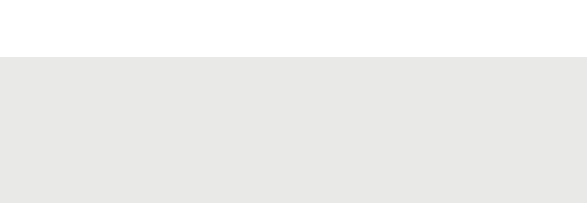
Pukekohe Demonstration Farm

A Demonstration Farm in Pukekohe has been established and co-funded by A Lighter Touch, Onions NZ and Vegetables NZ.

The farm is hosted by Baile Brothers and provides a working vegetable farm for onion growers, vegetable growers and wider horticulture stakeholders to visit and learn more about agroecological crop protection.

Vegetables NZ recently hosted a workshop on crop pest scouting at the farm. About 40 growers and agronomists heard about crop scouting principles and approaches from Graham Walker (Plant & Food Research) and Olivia Prouse (Cropping Services Ltd).

Industry leaders Antony Heywood (Vegetables NZ) and Stuart Davis (LeaderBrand) gave an outline of the Vegetables NZ investment in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes and A Lighter Touch projects related to vegetable crops. The group then took an extensive field walk identifying insect pests and beneficial species on three lettuce plantings at different stages of growth.



Update

Plants with benefits

Catch up with our beneficial planting project in Gisborne citrus orchards.



Jeff Smith



Taking steps together

Combining expertise and resources delivers more impactful research in a shorter time. This scale of cross-sector collaboration, funding and knowledge-sharing is the first of its kind in New Zealand. So, if you're not involved already, get on board and let's make things happen.

We're working with growers, scientists and industry groups on a range of crop protection issues.



"Finding biological control solutions that are better for the environment without compromising on quality and productivity are a must."

JULIET ANSELL - HEAD OF GLOBAL SCIENCE AND INNOVATION, ZESPRI



What's coming up

Get involved with these upcoming events and workshops

- **Northland Field Days** 2-4 March 2023
- **Wanaka A&P Show** 10 & 11 March 2023
- **Central Districts Field Days** 16-18 March 2023
- **Biosecurity: New Organisms workshop | University of Canterbury** 17 March 2023

Contact

Getting involved

To find out more about a A Lighter Touch or work that is specific to your crop, please contact your industry body group. There are projects under way nationwide.

For extra information about any of the articles above,

email us here at news@a-lighter-touch.co.nz

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Please forward this on to other future-focussed growers and producers.



Our mailing address is: