



A LIGHTER TOUCH

Progress report for the period January to March 2022

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This quarter has seen the completion of the field work for projects that focus on new age agrichemicals for crop protection. The downy mildew disease prediction model update has also been completed showcasing an *A Lighter Touch* funded project that provides growers with an agroecological tool that will support the management of a common onion disease.

Achievements from this period include:

- Delivery of the annual consumer focus report. The report provides information to guide the programme's direction and supports the overall assumptions of the programme.
- Field work from projects evaluating pesticides and biopesticides is complete for thrips in onions, botrytis in broad beans, sclerotinia in dwarf beans and soil borne disease in squash with reports due later in the year.
- Sector specific work with the Summerfruit insecticide residue project is complete and will provide a useful guide for growers who wish to use an alternative mode of action.
- The Gisborne citrus project has continued to provide a profile for the work of *A Lighter Touch*, with considerable interest from both fruit and vegetable participant groups.
- Work continues with vegetable participant groups to integrate their work into the onions Pukekohe Demonstration Farm site with a plan for demonstration crops and the rotation of these crops now completed.
- The HortPlus review of Metwatch, an online disease prediction tool for downy mildew in onions, has been completed and updated to include leaf wetness, a key parameter for predicting this disease.
- Onions New Zealand and HortPlus have presented the updated model to growers through newsletters, emails and presentations at Grower Forums. Extension activities focussing on the updated model will continue throughout the year.



Pukekohe Demonstration Farm meeting with participating vegetable group representatives



Newly planted vegetable crop at the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm