



PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021

www.a-lighter-touch.co.nz

The last quarter saw two new flagship projects being approved by the Programme Governance Group. These are part of our “proof of concept” workstream, where we try to demonstrate alternative ways of managing crops and managing pests.

- A site has been set up at Pukekohe, where agroecological and IPM approaches to crop protection for onions is being demonstrated. The aim is to include other vegetable crops into a long-term rotation at the site, which will become a focal point for discussion groups and field walks.
- A long term trial has also been established to research and demonstrate the best ways to introduce integrated pest management in commercial tomato greenhouses. A range of biological control agents are being tested, with the aim of finding optimal release rates and crop management.



Site visit, December 2021, Pukekohe model farm - industry representatives viewing the work underway on 4 hectare site

These new projects are in addition to proof of concept projects already underway:

- Arable field trials as part of the Foundation for Arable Research’s project to reduce overall agrichemical inputs into arable systems.
- Zespri’s project to find new biological control agents and develop an integrated pest management programme for passion vine hopper.



Citrus NZ’s Matt Carter checking out the insect life on the biodiversity plantings sown between rows in a Gisborne citrus orchard.

- Agroecological approaches to insect pest control in citrus – the use of understory planting to enhance the agroecosystem and provide resources for beneficial insects to thrive and to potentially reduce the need for applications of agrichemicals.

Several additional agrichemical and biopesticide residue and/or efficacy trials have started in the last quarter, with a total of 14 generic cross sector trials, and 7 crop specific trials underway. Others are also in the pipeline for Theme 3. In addition, a contract is being finalised for the review of all current insecticide resistance management strategies. This will put the programme well ahead of its contracted target.

Unfortunately our opportunities for field walks and engagement has been restricted in the last quarter. We are hopeful that in 2022 we can use our demonstration sites as focal points for agroecological crop protection.