



## Progress report for the period October to December 2022

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It is an exciting time at the A Lighter Touch Programme with the confirmation of Livia Esterhazy as Programme Director and Meredith Ryan as Administrator. Activity for this quarter is the continued support of participating product groups to develop project proposals for crop protection issues, both pan sector and crop specific as well spreading the A Lighter Touch vision. The Programme continues to go from strength to strength and the A Lighter Touch Team is buoyed by the reception that the 'reset' has received by participants and the wider horticulture community alike.

### Achievements from this period include:

- Confirmation of Livia Esterhazy as Programme Director and Meredith Ryan as Administrator for A Lighter Touch.
- Project Pack delivery to stakeholders ensuring a standardisation of project proposals and a reference for the ALT Technical Leads as they continue to support participants through project development.
- Supporting the development of project proposals for:
  - Vegetables NZ - Understanding Black field cricket phenology and developmental biology.
  - Case studies highlighting the regulatory pathway of new organisms and new technologies.
  - A grower/adviser friendly tool to enable good IPM based, crop protection decisions to be made considering the side effects of pesticides on the agroecosystem.
- The approval of:
  - Vegetables NZ - Boosting beneficials using biodiverse plantings on vegetable farms.
  - Summerfruit - Establishment of understory plantings in Summerfruit orchards to enhance biodiversity, weed control and soil health.
  - NZ Buttercup Squash Council - Soilborne disease management in Buttercup squash and annual arable & vegetable crops.
- Commencement of trials to evaluate alternate chemistry for the control of Brown rot in summerfruit and botrytis in boysenberries.
- A Lighter Touch *Enhancing Agroecosystems* Field Day in Gisborne which attracted 42 attendees from four different horticulture sectors and numerous organisations. It was a great opportunity for industry representatives and growers to see the first-hand the work that is being undertaken by A Lighter Touch and Citrus New Zealand and demonstrate the effectiveness of agroecology programmes.
- A field walk through FAR demonstration sites in Canterbury including meeting Growers that are hosting the trial work.
- Hosting the Pukekohe Young Growers at the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm. Before a field tour of current projects on site, the Young Growers were given an overview of the ALT programme.
- Presenting an overview of A Lighter Touch to kiwifruit Growers at the Zespri Organic Field Day in Omanawa, Tauranga.



*Jeff Smith (ALT) presenting to Growers at the Enhancing Agroecosystems Field Day on Iko Orchard, Gisborne*



*Howe Young and Olivia Prouse describing strip planting of buckwheat and alyssum to Young Growers at the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm*



*Marty Skurr (FAR Demonstration site host) & Jo Drummond (FAR) presenting to PGG and ALT members in Sheffield, Canterbury*