



Progress report for the period January to March 2023

www.a-lighter-touch.co.nz

As we enter the final quarter of the third year of the A Lighter Touch Programme we are excited to complete the ALT Team with Gina Jewell, Senior Communications Manager joining us. Activity for this quarter has included producing the Annual Plan and Budget for Year 4, ensuring it aligns with the strategy set by PGG and ISAG to achieve the Programmes objectives and outcomes.

Achievements from this period include:

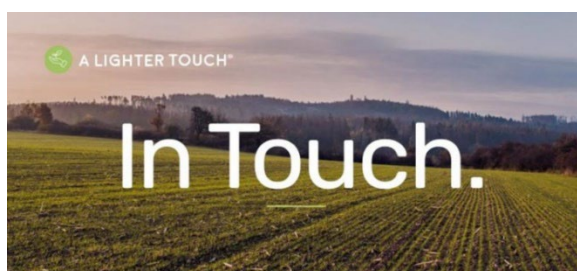
- PGG visit to the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm and their approval of the FY24 Annual Plan and budget.
- The approval of
 - Vegetables NZ - Understanding Black field cricket phenology and developmental biology.
 - Onions NZ – Variation to the validation of agroecological and IPM approaches to crop protection for onions and vegetable crops project.
- Supporting the development of minor use trial work for fruit and covered crops
- At the end of January, over 50 Growers listened to Graham Walker (Plant & Food Research) and Olivia Prouse (Cropping Services Ltd) talk about crop scouting principles and approaches and VNZI give an outline of A Lighter Touch projects related to vegetables on the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm.
- In February, the Programme Manager presented at Apata avocado Field Day. Although not part of the Programme, avocado growers were interested to hear about the A Lighter Touch Programme and updates from the understory planting projects that are being undertaken.
- In the middle of March, the Technical Leads hosted two workshops focussed on arthropod biocontrol agents and their use as potential solutions for crop protection issues in New Zealand. Entomology experts and commercial BCA providers shared their technical knowledge and experience and a working document will be developed to help further identify potential BCA solutions for stakeholders.
- The Agroecology Technical Lead attended the Life Sciences Summit – Biotech for a Better Tomorrow in Wellington. Many connections were made and it was encouraging to listen to other members of the science and primary industry discuss ideas and issues that are front and foremost of ISAG and PGGs thoughts.
- E-Newsletter publication, In Touch, began publication in February with 214 current subscribers.



PGG learning about the various projects on the Pukekohe Demonstration Farm.



ALT Programme Manager Sarah Sorensen updated avocado growers about the ALT Programme and understory planting projects.



Investment period contribution

During this Quarter
Programme to date

Co-investor contribution

\$594,110
\$5,683,878

MPI

\$435,954
\$3,047,548

Total investment

\$1,030,064
\$8,731,426