

THE AHUWHENUA TROPHY ROUND UP

DECEMBER 2020

»» A celebration to remember



On Friday 20th November, delayed due to Covid-19, the awards dinner for the Ahuwhenua Trophy Excellence in Māori Horticulture was able to take place.

More than 750 people came to Rotorua to celebrate the success of the finalists, and the ultimate winner, of the inaugural trophy for horticulture. That the event could take place in such difficult times was itself a reason for celebration and remarked on by all the speakers. It was a night of networking and renewing old friendships, and sharing in the success of the finalists of the Ahuwhenua Trophy and Young Māori Grower award.

A large number of dignitaries, from Te Ao Māori, the government, diplomats, agribusiness leaders and the Competition Trustees Hon Damien O'Connor (Minister for Agriculture), Hon Willie Jackson (Minister for Māori Development) and Dave Samuels (Secretary for Māori Development) and sponsors attended the awards dinner. A major highlight was the Governor General, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy who gave the keynote address.

But above all it was a special night for the finalists and their whānau.



AHUWHENUA TROPHY
EXCELLENCE IN
MĀORI HORTICULTURE
AWARD
2020



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A celebration to remember continued...

Norm Carter, Chair of Te Kaha 15B, Hineora Orchard and winner of the 2020 Ahuwhenua Trophy, Excellence in Māori Horticulture competition says he never expected to win, but to his surprise and delight, was called to the stage to receive the prestigious trophy from the Governor General Dame Patsy Reddy. As the announcement was made, a jubilant group from Te Kaha gathered on the stage to celebrate their success.

Te Kaha 15B, Hineora Orchard comprises of 11.5 hectares, on which the Trust runs a kiwifruit joint venture operation, a commercial pack-house facility housing the local kiwifruit spray company in which the Trust holds shares. Prior to the Trust's creation in 1970, the land was largely occupied by different whānau who farmed the block maintaining a subsistence living growing a range of fruit and vegetables for the local community. The Trust went into a joint venture and now produce 133,000 trays of G3 SunGold kiwifruit. The Trust is due to assume full ownership of the land in about three years' time.

Norm Carter says the win has really put Te Kaha on the map and that his people have achieved a lot over the years. He says the win also has some special significance for them.

"Bill Swinton won the first Ahuwhenua cup in 1933 and he was a dairy farmer from nearby Raukokore and we are related to him. So for us to win the inaugural horticultural trophy 87 years on is really awesome," he says.



Norm Carter stated that many of their iwi live in Australia and he hopes winning the trophy will encourage them to return home and get into meaningful local employment. He says while they can't expand their operation, they hope to assist other whānau to invest in their properties and have something to leave to their children and grandchildren.

The Chairman of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee, Kingi Smiler says Hineora Orchard was a worthy winner of the competition. He says like the other finalists, Otama Marere from Te Puke and Ngāi Tukairangi Trust from Tauranga, their operations are something their whānau can be proud of.

"The Trustees of Te Kaha have shown great vision, persistence and resilience to establish their operation and to achieve some impressive results," he says.

Kingi Smiler says all three finalists have set a benchmark for future entrants in this competition which will be hard to eclipse.

"What makes it all the more impressive is that they have done this in one of the most difficult times in the history of the country and they, Māori and the whole country should be proud of their efforts," he says.



AHUWHENUA DAIRY PROGRAMME 2021

Entries for the dairy competition have now closed and the judging to select the finalists will take place early next year.

The finalists in the competition will be announced at a function at Parliament at midday on Wednesday 24th February 2021.

This will be followed by the field days for each of up to three finalists. The field days are scheduled for:

Thursday 25th March - Thursday 1st April - Thursday 8th April

The awards dinner will be held at TSB Stadium in New Plymouth on Friday 14th May 2021.

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Praise from Governor General and others

In her address, Her Excellency the Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy noted that it was wonderful to see so many people celebrating the success of Māori in such difficult times.

“Ngata and Bledisloe designed the Ahuwhenua Trophy as a way of recognising and encouraging excellence in Māori farming. If they were here tonight I am sure they would be very pleased to see this new focus on horticulture. Lord Bledisloe’s farm in the UK was certainly diversified. In addition to pigs, cattle and dairy cows he had orchards, grew potatoes and grain. Both men would be very impressed with the 21st century export returns for kiwifruit, wine, apples, and honey and to see the many opportunities for training and employment,” she says.

Dame Patsy Reddy told the finalists to be proud of their stories because they will inspire others to follow the example set by Sir Apirana Ngata and Lord Bledisloe.



Agriculture and Trade Minister, Hon Damien O’Connor says it’s inspiring to hear the stories about what Māori have done with land that was not previously being fully utilised. He said it’s great to see it transformed into smart profitable businesses that

have benefited whānau and iwi.

“The advantage that Māori have is that they don’t focus on the land in terms of ownership and asset value – they focus on the business on the land and over time that will be more sustainable. I think that if we can embrace the values Māori have in the production system they have and transfer that to market development, we have story that is truly unique and has huge value in the market place where people want to buy products from New Zealand,” he says.

He says New Zealand should be shouting from the roof tops with that sort of values system which underpins our high quality food we export.



Hon Willie Jackson, the new Minister of Māori Development described the evening as a wonderful celebration with so much history behind it. It was Jackson’s first official function as a Minister of the Crown.

“This event is unique and is something you won’t get at a traditional awards ceremony,” he says.



High praise from industry bosses

Bruce Cameron, the Zespri Chairman said the Ahuwhenua Trophy awards are an absolutely outstanding outcome for Māori in horticulture. He says the older generation have put the orchards together and now the young ones are coming back to the land. Land that was once in low value crops is now producing kiwifruit and will deliver better value to iwi.



“The financial horsepower is now available for iwi to develop their land, they have got great commercial models, they have got passion and they understand it. Above all they have a connection with sustainability which is so important for the consumer,” he says.

Horticulture New Zealand President, Barry O’Neil said the awards function was a powerful statement about Māori commitment to the whenua and horticulture. He says every finalist had something to say about the importance of the whenua, and their challenges to take back control and develop profitable horticultural businesses.

“These horticulture ventures epitomise kaitiakitanga. They have become assets of which the whole iwi is proud and shares in, providing employment and careers now and for future generations,” he says.

Barry O’Neil said Horticulture New Zealand was privileged to be a sponsor of the inaugural awards and looks forward to continuing its support of Māori horticulture.



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A Happy Winner

Maatutaera Akonga is the inaugural winner of the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Grower Award. The 26 year-old is a senior leading hand at Llewellyn Horticulture based in Hastings.

The announcement was made by Dr Charlotte Severne, the Māori Trustee and Chief Executive of Te Tumu Paeroa at the Ahuwhenua Trophy awards dinner in Rotorua.

The two other finalists in the competition were 24 year-old Brandon Cross of Tauranga who works as trainee orchard manager for the large kiwifruit orchard management and post-harvest company Seeka, and 25 year-old Finnisha Tuhiwai who is packhouse manager for Maungatapere Berries located west of Whangarei.

Dr Severne presented Maatutaera with the winner's trophy and congratulated him on his achievement. All three finalists were presented with koru trophies and certificates by the sponsors of the award, Te Puni Kōkiri, Primary ITO, Te Tumu Paeroa and Horticulture New Zealand.

Award judge Aaron Hunt from Te Tumu Paeroa said "the standard of entrants in this inaugural competition for horticulture, was very high. It also reflects the number of young Māori who are making successful careers in horticulture."



Maatutaera Akonga said, that he didn't expect to win the award but that it was a wonderful evening and he had the time of his life. He said he got pushed in to

entering the competition by his mentors who encouraged him to go beyond where he had been before.

"So I thought, I would push through and give this one as go as well. It was different in that other competitions occur over a day and are all over by the end of the night. But with Covid-19 this one has been months now in the making," he says.

Maatutaera says during the delay, "wondering about the outcome was always at the back of my mind." He says he worked through the lockdown and managed well having to deal with additional health and safety and compliance issues such as social distancing.

As for the future, Maatutaera says its upwards and onwards from here.

ALLFLEX ANNOUNCE \$84,000 PRIZE FOR NEXT YEAR'S AHUWHENUA WINNER

Allflex enjoy and are proud of their long standing relationship with the Ahuwhenua Trophy, Māori Farming Award for Dairy and are looking forward to being part of the dairy round again in 2021. To celebrate and acknowledge the importance of the dairy sector and the value Allflex place on the industry they are pleased to announce a significant prize for the 2021 Ahuwhenua Trophy, Māori Farming Award for Dairy round.

The winning recipient will receive a complete Allflex Monitoring system for up to 450 cows valued at \$84,000. Allflex monitoring collar system, detects all heats providing the optimal time for the farmer to AI, the collars also monitor the cows health identifying cows that are under pressure early, meaning less downtime recovering improving animal health outcomes and ultimately giving the farmer reliable data early so



they can make better decisions on farm, all while giving the farmer more time.

This year Allflex have collared close to 50,000 cows in New Zealand alone and have seen the industry interest in the agri-tech monitoring system grow considerably over the past 12 months. Jared Briggs, Allflex NZ's General Manager says "The Allflex Cow Collars are a gamechanger for farmers and are receiving positive reports back from farmers who have only just installed the collars this season, saying they

are already seeing the huge improvements the collars are making on their farming operations. Many stating they have just completed the easiest mating season ever". "I am proud and pleased to be putting this prize up next year and want to acknowledge the good work the Ahuwhenua Trust are doing in this space and we look forward to being part of the sponsors team again in 2021", Briggs explains.

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CALLING ALL YOUNG MĀORI DAIRY FARMERS

Young Māori who work on dairy farms or who are involved in the dairy industry are being encouraged to enter the 2021 award for the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award.

Kingi Smiler, Chairman of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee, says this is a great learning opportunity for young Māori involved in dairy to build up their networks and to meet people in the industry who can help them further their careers. He says he's well aware of many great things young Māori are doing and this is the perfect opportunity for them to show the country what they are doing and how well they are progressing their careers.

Kingi Smiler is also encouraging employers and training providers to support suitable employees and students by working with them to enter the award.

He said past winners and finalists of the competition have extolled the benefits of entering the competition, including the knowledge and contacts they have made. Kingi Smiler says the competition is about future proofing the industry by helping young people gain confidence in themselves and experience in a range of facets in the industry.

"All have gone on to take leadership roles in the industry. The Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer alumni is a very impressive group and they give us great comfort that the future is in very capable hands," he says. A \$5,000 prize pool is up for grabs and this includes a special Study Tour & Leadership Programme for all the finalists.

The dairy competition is run every three years – in the other years a competition for the young Māori sheep and beef farmers and the horticultural grower of the year are run. Past winners of the dairy competition include Tangaroa Walker, Wiremu Reid, Jack Raharuhi and Harepaora Ngaheue.

Entries for the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award for dairy close on the 12th February 2021. Details are on the Ahuwhenua Trophy website, www.ahuwhenuatrophy.maori.nz. The finalists will be announced in mid-March and the winner will be named at the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition awards dinner in May 2021 in New Plymouth.



Call for mentors for the winners of the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award

The Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer Award was inaugurated in 2012, recognising the success of young Māori making their careers in the agricultural sector. This year the award expanded to include young Māori growers in the horticultural sector.

Te Tumu Paeroa who are organising the alumni says there are now eight winners of the awards who are seeking mentors to support them in reaching their personal, business and career goals.

They are now on the hunt for experts in agri-business who can share their experience with the next generation of primary industry leaders and the question is Does this sound like you?

This mentoring programme uses the Mentoring Foundation's model – which starts with an evening Zoom hui with some light-touch training and explanation about the process. You'll then be matched with a mentee based on your areas of expertise and their mentoring goals.

Mentors will need to commit to a total of six mentoring sessions over 6 months to help the mentee work towards an identified goal. You'll be supported throughout the programme and will have clear guidance on how to make the most of a mentoring relationship. Mentoring can be done by Zoom so your location isn't a barrier.

Register your interest in being a mentor here:
<https://forms.gle/SQtFCGbDCshWmXKe8>

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OTHER NEWS

BIOSECURITY NO 1

Biosecurity is even more important to New Zealand as the country starts to recover from Covid-19.

That's the message from Penny Nelson, the Deputy Director-General for Biosecurity New Zealand, at Ministry for Primary Industries. She says that biosecurity underpins our primary sector exports economy and as well, many of the special taonga we have. She says we just can't afford to have big inclusions at the moment.

"I was interested to hear recently that in the KPMG's agribusiness survey, biosecurity has been the top issue for the past 11 years. I think that New Zealanders realise we have a special way of life and we want to keep it," she says.

Penny Nelson says the biosecurity awards which have been held for the last four years are designed to celebrate the really great things that a range of people in communities and industry are doing for biosecurity. She said that each year there has been an increase in the number of entries and said that as word gets out about the awards, more and more people are becoming involved.

Minister Damien O'Connor told the audience that biosecurity remains the most important area of government. He said it's great to have an awards programme that recognises the huge contribution that industry and volunteers make to keeping the border secure from biosecurity risks.

"Even though we have cut down the number of people moving in and out of the country due to Covid, we have got more e-commerce and goods coming into the country that could be contaminated in some way. Unless we continue to improve our systems we are going to have incursions and that will be costly," he says.



Penny Nelson

HORTICULTURE SECTOR RECOGNISED IN BIOSECURITY AWARDS

Linda Peacock, of Kiwifruit Vine Health in Mount Maunganui, received the Minister's Biosecurity Award. Minister O'Connor described her as a long-standing, passionate, empathetic, focused, and enthusiastic contributor to our biosecurity system and a worthy winner of this award.

"For more than 30 years, Linda has worked collaboratively with growers and technical teams from all growing regions, taking science-based lessons and turning them into easily understood, practical solutions which have saved vast numbers of kiwifruit growers from undue stress and loss," he says.

A Special Award was won by the New Zealand kiwifruit industry for its outstanding commitment to biosecurity. Minister O'Connor described the sector as a powerhouse in biosecurity, which has responded to biosecurity incursions with commitment, foresight, compassion, determination and, perhaps most importantly, collaboration.

MIRAKA TRIUMPHS AT BIOSECURITY AWARDS

Taupo based Māori dairy company Miraka took the top honours at this year's national biosecurity awards – winning both the industry award and the supreme award for their Te Ara Miraka programme which boosted biosecurity awareness and culture change with its farmer suppliers.

The announcement was made by Hon Damien O'Connor Minister of Agriculture at a special awards dinner at parliament attended by more than 200 people.

Te Ara Miraka incentivises farmers by way of an increase in their annual milk pay-out to improve a whole range of practices on their farms. These include environmental, milk quality, food safety, animal welfare, health and safety and biosecurity. Each farmer was trained in biosecurity risk assessment, risk mitigations and how to create and implement a biosecurity plan within their business.

The supreme award was presented to the Miraka team by the Hon Damien O'Connor who praised the company and its staff for their initiative and strong commitment to biosecurity.

It was a special night for Miraka Milk Supply Manager, Grant Jackson who is responsible for the Te Ara Miraka programme.

He said the programme has been operating for about five years and said that Miraka are starting to see some significant behavioural changes back on farm which benefits the individual businesses, the industry, and the community.

"It's about educating farmers and explaining why we are doing this and not treating it as a compliance matter. The result is that we have really good engagement with over 70% of our farmer suppliers signed up to the scheme in the matter of a year. We trained our people and got them to assess the biosecurity risks on the farm and then draw up a plan with specific mitigations," he says

Miraka CEO Richard Wyeth, says he's blown away with the company taking out the two awards. He says kaitiakitanga is something they have focused on from day one. "It's a really great acknowledgement of that," he says.

Wyeth says in farming terms biosecurity is critical, "Covid-19 has taught us a lesson and we must ramp up our efforts in biosecurity to ensure that we have a very effective and robust system. At Miraka we plan to strengthen our biosecurity programme".



Linda Peacock



Minister Damien O'Connor with Grant Jackson and Richard Wyeth

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