

# **A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO FOOD SAFETY FOR THE EXPORT OF NEW ZEALAND AVOCADOS**

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The export of horticulture products from New Zealand is undertaken under a NZ Inc strategy and regulated by the New Zealand Government through the Ministry for Primary Industries yet managed by industry.

Each horticulture product group is structured in its own unique way. Some horticulture product groups operate as a single desk marketer, providing logistics, operating rules and research services to industry. Other product groups, like the Avocado industry allow individual marketers to operate under government legislation, that being the Horticulture Export Authority Act (HEA). This legislation allows for the registration of multiple marketers to operate under a single industry system which is defined and articulated in an Export Marketing Strategy. The Avocado Export Marketing Strategy is developed by the New Zealand Avocado Industry Limited, the designated Product Group for avocados. Development of the Export Marketing Strategy is prepared in consultation with industry stakeholders and covers the activities of growers, harvesters, packers and exporters.

Using the regulatory framework of the HEA, the avocado industry Export Marketing Strategy sets out the requirements or rules that stakeholders must operate under for the production, packing and export of avocados. NZ Avocado collaborates, supports, checks and audits these processes under a systems approach, detailed within industry quality standards, to ensure food safety as well as all phytosanitary requirements are met.

The industry systems are reviewed regularly through a process of industry consultation to ensure they are fit for purpose and communicated to the industry stakeholders at the beginning of each export season.

When implemented diligently the processes that support compliance with the industry regulations can serve the stakeholders well in the face of human error or an accidental event. They provide a robust pathway of investigation, trace back and ultimately lead to a clear understanding and management of any resulting the food safety impacts.