

David Tanner

I was born into the kiwifruit industry; have built a career in the industry and I am passionate about the industry's future. I seek to continue my directorship on the Kiwifruit Vine Health Board, as their current Chair, to make a positive difference to the industry.



My career in horticultural science and innovation leadership was grounded by my education at Massey University attaining B Hort (Tech) with First Class Honours and a Ph.D in Food Engineering. I have a proven track record, driving growth through incremental and breakthrough innovation in the agrifood sector.

I spent eight years with Zespri as General Manager Science and Innovation. In this role, I was responsible for strategy and leadership of Zespri's Innovation team and their investment in R&D. This role was incredibly rewarding as I was able to use my science leadership experience in utilising complex science concepts for genuine business improvement and profitability. Prior to my time at Zespri, I spent five years as Centre Director Sydney with a global top-six R&D authority, Food Science Australia which is Australia's largest and most diversified food research organisation, and a joint venture between CSIRO and the Victorian government.

As many will know, Psa struck our industry in November 2010. Whilst it had a devastating effect, we should be proud of the proactive manner in which this coordinated industry responded. I was fortunate to be able to dedicate 2½ years to leading the science and technical response to Psa. This experience has meant that I understand Psa, and the risk of any other biosecurity event, in a profound and comprehensive way.

Since leaving Zespri and creating a horticultural innovation company, Start Afresh Ltd, I have become a kiwifruit grower. Together with other partners, we own 10 hectares of Hayward, and 7 hectares of Gold3 in Katikati and Te Puke, and also a 40-hectare apple development in Hawkes Bay. My approach to orcharding is firstly to ensure that the plants are of strong health and then, understanding best practice, to strive for productivity, taste and fruit size. I am as hands on as I can be and gain a great deal of satisfaction improving the orchards.

I understand governance and the responsibilities this demands from directors. I am an experienced Board Director, actively participating in a number of other education, food and agribusiness Boards currently. I am a member of the Institute of Directors, the International Society of Horticultural Science and also a Fellow on the Institute of Professional Engineers.

If I am successfully re-elected as a Kiwifruit Vine Health director, I would be continuing to offer my extensive expertise in plant health and biosecurity risks, and understanding of the research and development process, for the benefit of the industry. In addition to the technical skills I possess, I also offer the perspective of a vigilant grower, enthusiastic teacher and commercial orchard owner.

I look forward to receiving your support in guiding KVH to deliver its vision of a biosecurity-resilient New Zealand kiwifruit industry.

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