

The year ahead for KVH

The kiwifruit industry has experienced significant change since Psa was first identified in NZ in November 2010 - and likewise so has KVH. Initially established to lead the industry's response and then recovery from Psa, today KVH is a very different organisation, with a major focus on identifying and being fully prepared for other biosecurity risks to the industry.

While Psa is still a significant focus of KVH, including managing risks from other non-NZ forms of Psa or resistant strains, growers are now increasingly able to minimise Psa impacts utilising specific management techniques, along with growing tolerant varieties, such as Hayward and G3.

KVH was the first industry organisation to enter into a biosecurity partnership with MPI, and we now have a fruit fly operational agreement in place where industry and government jointly determine the best course of action for readiness and responses. We are actively working on an agreement for Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, as well as being in the process of finalising a partnership agreement for kiwifruit specific biosecurity risks, such as *Ceratocystis fimbriata*, the fungal pathogen devastating kiwifruit production in Brazil.

At the end of last year Minister Guy launched a very important direction statement for biosecurity, which KVH provided input throughout the drafting process - and we are very pleased with the final directions. There are five core areas that it focuses on, and I would like to raise three of these.

A biosecurity team of 4.7 million is one of the most important directions, as we all know that growers and KVH on their own cannot achieve the level of protection we need. Every Kiwi needs to be aware of and help mitigate biosecurity risks. While it may be an ambitious goal, it is essential to the ongoing success of our industry. However, kiwifruit can still be doing more, and KVH will continue working with the industry to clarify what actions can be taken on a daily basis to protect grower investments.

Governance and leadership of the biosecurity system is the second direction I'd like to comment on, which up until now has been undertaken by MPI. We all know from our Psa experience that industry cannot rely on MPI alone for protection, rather we must work collectively. Under our GIA partnership with MPI, KVH has accountability for biosecurity outcomes now, as do other industry signatories and regional councils. KVH is working to influence future governance of the biosecurity system that is representative of industry interests, and is appropriately skilled to achieve ongoing benefits for all NZ.

A tool box for tomorrow is the last direction I want to touch on, as it is essential for achieving positive results. Our understanding of biosecurity risks is often limited, and we also need R&D to find better and more sustainable solutions. KVH and Zespri have already invested over \$16 million in Psa research and innovation to understand how we can manage Psa, and each year we are investing \$400k on R&D for other biosecurity threats. We are also actively influencing the key science groups, CRI's, B3, and the National Science Challenge for Our Biological Heritage, so that they focus their own efforts on the areas important for industry to achieve better biosecurity results.

Late last year the KVH Board reviewed our strategic direction to ensure we deliver on our core purpose of protecting the NZ kiwifruit industry from biosecurity threats. We can't achieve this alone, and we must continue to work in partnership with industry, MPI, and other groups, and importantly use our own industry thought leadership and influence wherever possible to achieve this.

The KVH team looks forward to working with you in 2017, collectively to achieve a biosecurity resilient kiwifruit industry – Barry O'Neil, Chief Executive, KVH