

NZPPI Workforce Workshop

8:30	Coffee & tea available	
9:00	Welcome and introductions	
9:15	Define and discuss the issues The current situation How we got here	Discussion (Facilitator)
10:00	The NZ qualifications framework How it works – Presentation / Q&A	Kate Longman PITO
10:30 Break		
10:45	Generating ideas Ideas & initiatives from other sectors i. Skills badges ii. Growsafe – industry owned & operated iii. Federated Farmers Apprenticeship Scheme Discussion	M Dolan Jane Lamb Nick Hansen Facilitator
11:45	What is getting in our way & how can we address this? Identify the barriers and how to overcome them	Breakout groups (Facilitator)
12:30 Lunch		
1:00	What does success look like? What does a better framework look like? What is possible & what are the constraints?	Breakout groups Group discussion (Facilitator)
1:45	Develop an action plan	Group discussion (Facilitator)
2:30	Generating commitment	Group discussion (Facilitator)
3:00	Next steps	
3:15 Workshop close		

INFORMATION

The current situation

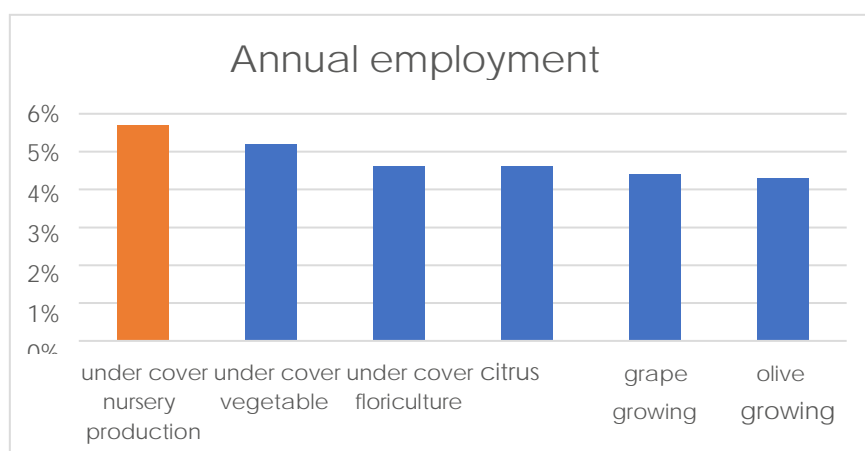
- While the NZ nursery sector has a long history of training and education, participation has been dropping steadily in recent years, despite an increasing workforce.
- Many NZPPI Members are frustrated with the current training framework in NZ, reporting that it is out of date and is focused on the wrong skills.
- There is a lack of opportunity for experienced plant producers (including those looking to retire) to hand over their skills to young people. We risk losing important skills and knowledge.
- The declining demand for training means that many traditional training institutions have withdrawn their investment in horticulture training programmes.
- In the future, plant producers will face competition for skilled workers as other similar sectors continue to grow and invest in training and education programmes in their own sectors.
- Many primary industry organisations are investing in workforce strategies to ensure that their sectors can compete for skilled workers to fill new roles in the longterm.

Future trends:

- More workers will be required to meet the increasing future demand.
- Many traditional job roles will require new skills and competencies.
- Workers will require training and support to adapt to work in a more sophisticated workplace, using new technologies and interpersonal skills.
- Creating value in our sector will require a new skill in areas such as production, technology (automation and robotics) and quality systems.
- In addition to horticultural science and commerce, tertiary qualified personnel will be required in areas such as engineering, biosecurity, regulatory compliance (employment and environment) and market knowledge. These skills that are not widely available in our sector at present.

Meeting the future demand:

MPI has identified the plant production sector as one of the fastest growing sectors in the primary industries.



(Ref: *Future capability needs for the primary industries in New Zealand (April 2014)*).

To meet the future demand for workers it is estimated that the industry will need to retain its existing workforce and then work to attract an additional 190 new employees each year until 2025.

Attracting new workers

- Many people have traditionally thought of nursery work as a low skill, low pay option with limited career & education opportunities.
- In many cases career and qualification pathways are not clearly defined.
- We are competing with sectors that have well developed workforce & education strategies & investment plans.

Worker retention

- Workforce retention is critical as existing workers already have many of the skills needed.
- High staff turnover can undermine investment in training, discouraging further investment.
- There is need to retain qualified and high-performing individuals in the sector.
- We need to align and improve our professional development & leadership programmes.

Meeting the future demand for skills and qualifications

In the future the nursery industry will need to have more highly skilled workforce. Workers in traditional (nursery worker) roles will require additional skills and qualifications, but in addition to this, there will be increased need for professional skills including engineering, science and management.

In 2012, just 39% of workers in the horticulture sector held qualifications (level 2 or above), however it is expected this will need to rise to 65% by the year 2025.

To meet this target, the nursery industry will need to attract 49 new qualified employees per year in addition to 198 existing employees completing qualifications each year.

Higher level qualifications (level 4 and above) will be required in the following areas:

- Horticulture / science: 15% (of qualified employees)
- Engineering, IT & related fields: 11%
- Other (HR, management etc): 9%

The need for training in these areas will be needed across all sectors, including the food, forestry, amenity and biodiversity sectors. Training will also be required across the supply chain, including nursery production, distribution and retail.

To support nursery businesses to identify their training needs and to meet these needs, NZPPI will work in the following areas:

- Work with the Primary ITO to implement the new (2018) nursery qualification framework (levels 2 - 5)
- Encourage employers and employees to engage in industry and workplace training
- Provide support for businesses to identify their needs for training and skills development.

We need to build on our strengths

- Plant production is meaningful, interesting work. The diversity and depth of knowledge is endless and provides huge opportunity to engage people in learning early on for ongoing training.
- Nurseries are great places to work and learn, compared to other workplaces like dairy farms, factories & distribution centres, construction sites, etc.
- The nursery sector offers an opportunity to work and learn while living in the regions (avoiding the rent crisis & living costs in the city).
- There are diverse roles and opportunities in a nursery business compared to businesses like orchards and farms.
- The demand for graduates with qualifications in horticultural production, science or management is increasing.

We need to address or manage our weaknesses

- The career pathways in nursery production are unclear or not compelling. Careers advisors in schools have information about careers in farming, production horticulture, forestry etc, but not our sector.
- Starting at the bottom in the nursery sector may mean minimum wage, whereas other sectors are increasingly starting workers above this rate and accelerating wages quickly to the next level.
- Some nursery businesses are traditional workplaces with basic facilities, technology and a traditional workplace culture. Many businesses in the primary sector are improving their work environment & culture to attract and retain workers.

We need to make the most of our opportunities

- The nursery sector has completed the review of its qualification framework. We are ahead of other horticulture sectors in doing this. Implementing this qualifications framework as part of a well-developed sector strategy and will put us ahead of other sectors.
- New learning methods that utilise digital systems to deliver high quality and engaging training material are well suited to our sector.
- The current focus on the nursery sector, e.g. the billion trees programme, will increase knowledge of our industry through events, media coverage, etc.
- There are a number of scholarships, awards and leadership opportunities available in our sector that could be better packaged and promoted.
- Providing emerging leaders (aged 30 +) with opportunities to develop their leadership skills will enable the future generation of leaders to emerge.
- Two years nil fees may be used as an incentive to encourage people to step up to

higher education.

- The increasing demand for plants driven by food production, biodiversity and infrastructure projects and the billion trees project drives the need for investment in our people.
- Aligning and organising our sector will improve visibility and confidence among funding providers (Government & industry). Demonstrating our ability to manage grants and deliver outcomes will increase the likelihood that we will win grants and investment in the future.
- Collaborating with organisations that share our mission and goals will increase the likelihood of success. We need to be able to bring something to the table, including a clear strategy and our energy, resources and knowledge to co invest.

Threats

- Larger sectors (kiwifruit, viticulture, pipfruit) are increasing their investment in workforce development by targeting existing and new workers and developing sector specific qualifications. We need to collaborate with these initiatives and find ways to achieve success for ourselves.
- The nursery sector may be falling behind other primary sectors in employment practices. Getting the basics right is a pre-requisite to building successful training and education programmes. Many primary sectors are making progress in improving their employment practices, including better employment contracts, work conditions, health & safety initiatives Examples include the Federated Farmers employment charter, human rights audits (GRASP) in the hort sector.
- Many training institutions are reviewing their education programmes and focusing on programmes that have a better return on investment. Horticulture programmes may continue to disappear as this happens. Traditional horticulture training requires infrastructure (glasshouses etc) & has small class sizes.

Changing education models

Information

Primary industry education is in a phase of rapid change.

Many of the large training providers, including private providers, polytechnics and universities that delivered education programmes in the past have scaled back, or abandoned their programmes. The remaining institutions are undergoing a rapid transformation in the way they operate.

- developing distinct strategies for curriculum design, learning delivery & trainee support
- investment in technology and systems
- focus on courses that require less buildings & infrastructure (e.g. can be delivered in lecture rooms vrs greenhouses & field laboratories)
- upskilling trainers & teachers to address problems with morale.

Examples of innovations in training delivery that are emerging in NZ include;

- Flexible times and locations for study to accommodate work, study and family commitments. (Wananga)
- Blending online and face to face learning (Wananga)
- Setting up remote training centres in high demand areas. (Unitec)
- Immersive boot camps for advanced learning (Development Academy / Unitec)
- Panel assessment of skills, knowledge and work portfolios for older learners (Otago Polytech)
- High (very high) quality online learning material (Open Polytech's iQualify model).

Innovations overseas:

- Analytics to predict the demand for training, including where specific skills are needed.
- Analytics to identify struggling trainees & targeting interventions. (Georgia State University).
- Game approach to learning (gamification) and thumbs up's, nudges, texts etc to encourage course completion. (Swinburn online, Melbourne).
- Licensing training models from specialist curriculum providers (Western Governors University, Utah).