

SUPPLYLINE



NEWS FROM MG MARKETING

GROWER PROFILE.

ROPER & SON LTD

LAYING SUSTAINABLE FOUNDATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

Roper and Son have come a long way in recent years, taking huge steps forward in transforming their business into a highly sustainable operation. The team have a great deal of focus on protecting the future and have a strong appetite for information and knowledge on how to improve on current growing practices.

Owner, Lance Roper is driven by the desire to have a successful family business and enjoys involving sons Lincoln and Douglas, while also working closely alongside operations manager, Brendan Herries.

Located in Lincoln and Darfield in Canterbury, they are one of the largest peeled red onion growers in New Zealand. Roper and Son also recently took over orders for Nelson based grower, Dalquharran following the retirement of owners, Peter and Pauline Sutton.

The 200-hectare farm also produces pumpkin, beetroot and a range of vegetable seeds.

“Our business has been built around the quality of our peeled red onions,” says Lance. “They make up around 93% of our business.”

A lot has changed since Lance started the business in 1991, the same year he became an MG Marketing grower-shareholder.

“Farming is not what it used to be,” says Lance. “It’s really technical and there’s a lot you need to be across.”

“There’s more technology, different chemical management, and as a business we have a greater drive towards sustainability.”

In addition to significant planting and new technology, they have invested in a unique water treatment system which has had a positive impact on their farm.

“The area where the pumpkin gets washed there was a lot of dirt that was heading straight into the drain,” says Brendan. “So, we came up with a solution to direct the water into a large pond where all the sediment filters out.”

“The water is slowed down and the sediment remains in the pond with fresh, clean water going out. We’ve also added native plants to help slow the water down and also aerate it.”

Roper and Son was one of the first vegetable growers to have a Farm Environment Plan in place which includes planting over 2,000 trees.

“One of our biggest projects was shifting most fences 1.2 metres in and adding a bunding to reduce spray and dust drift,” says Lance. “We’ve also added native trees to enhance stream margins and improve the habitat with some areas fully fenced off.”

“Following our farm environment audit, we achieved three ‘As’ and we are pretty proud of that.”

“Part of it is making sure we look after our brand - we want our customers and consumers to seek out the Roper name. We’ve made huge progress by continually looking to improve and the future is about capitalising on it.”

They are also in discussions with Lincoln University about becoming involved in their Energy Farm Project.

“We’ve met to talk about how we can use our waste streams to make energy, including onion and pumpkin skins,” says Lincoln. “We’ve undertaken some initial tests and it certainly looks promising. As a business we’re looking to be carbon neutral and this could be one of the projects that supports us to get there.”

“A big part of our sustainability programme is formalising a lot of what we do,” says Brendan. “It’s easy to say your water looks cleaner but if you’re serious you need to put measures against it. By documenting it all we can see we are improving and where we need to focus.”

“We have a saying, if you don’t write down your goals then they’re just daydreams,” adds Lincoln.

There are changes likely in the next decade or two, including the prospect of handing the business over to the next generation. Lance remains upbeat about the future of the farm and the business.

“If you don’t think about what’s ahead, you get left behind,” says Lance. “We’ve already been making decisions that will keep the family business together and in place for the next generation.”



↑ Natives have been planted to enhance stream margins
 ✓ MG Representative Roger Georgieff, Lincoln Roper, Douglas Roper, Lance Roper & MG Representative Andrew Cross.

“The fact we have a succession plan is a competitive advantage,” adds Lincoln. “Sustainability equals longevity and is a balance across the environment, community and business.”

Lance enjoys a strong relationship with the team at MGs and said he appreciates the support.

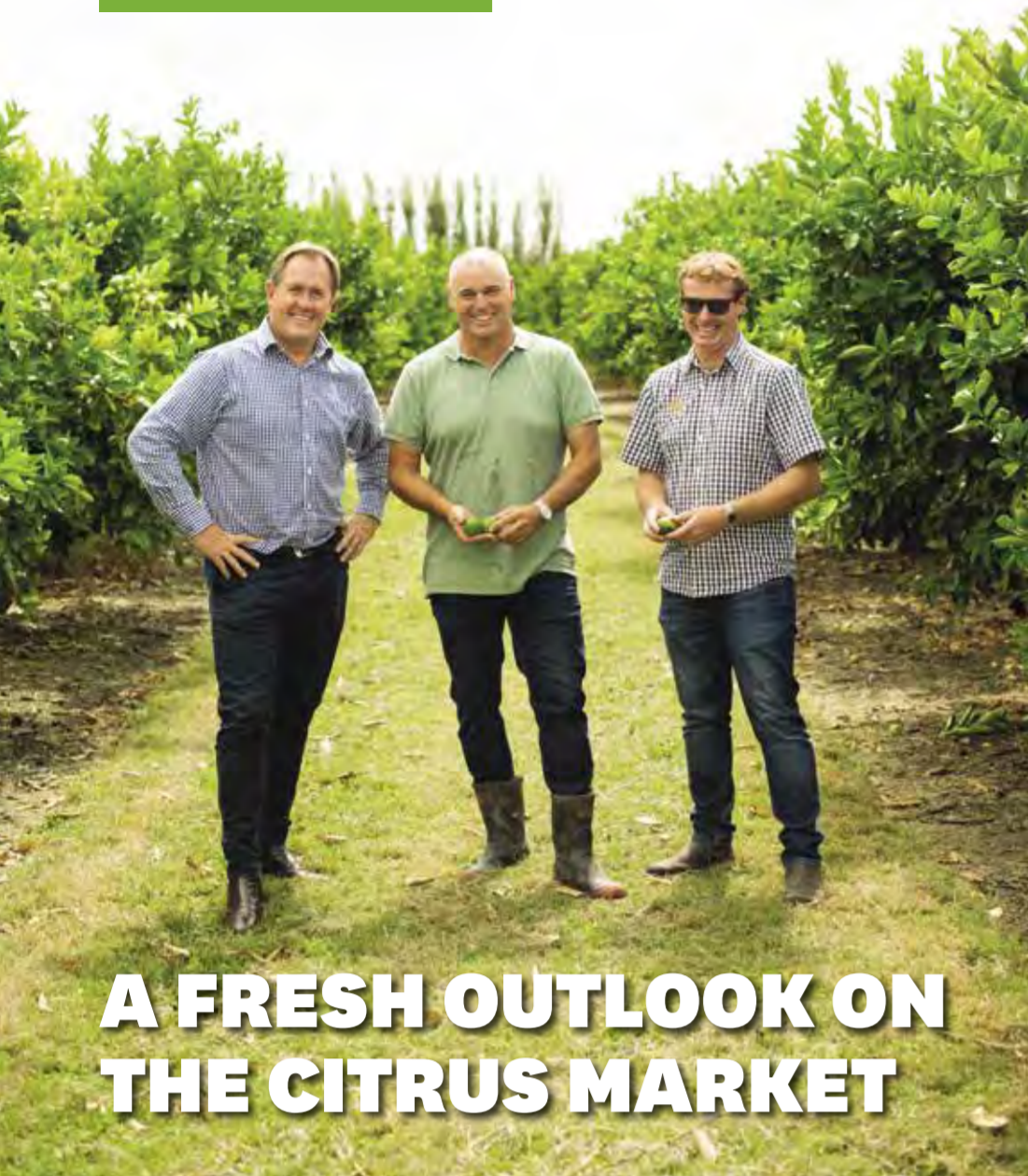
“I work closely with Andrew Cross and get along well with the MG Marketing reps in the branches,” says Lance. “The relationship is pretty trusting. We know where we stand, and they do the best for us each day.”

Canterbury

Crops grown across 200 Ha

Red onions, pumpkins & beetroot





A FRESH OUTLOOK ON THE CITRUS MARKET

Jason and Hannah Galloway get a great sense of pride from growing quality Satsuma mandarins, Encore Mandarins, Navel Oranges, limes, Finger limes, Yen Ben lemons, and Meyer lemons on their orchard in Ormond, near Gisborne.

They're not the type of growers who sit back and watch the trees grow. They're constantly seeking advice and guidance from the team at First Fresh who offer best-practice input into orchard management. On top of that, they're always on the lookout to find new citrus varieties that offer great taste, yield and superior quality to consumers.



Citrus grown across 15 hectares (3 blocks)



Main crops grown: mandarins, oranges, limes & lemons

Unlike many growers, the Galloways weren't born into growing, with Jason only starting full time on their 15 hectare citrus orchard in 2018. In many ways their background and experience has helped them see things through fresh eyes. When visiting their home-block, it's clear they've worked tirelessly to build a business that is underpinned by fresh ideas, innovation and a strong team culture.



← MG Representative Mike Breitmeyer, Jason Galloway & First Fresh Representative Matt Carter

While they are relatively new to farming, they've made a significant impact with their leadership in the New Zealand citrus category and were acknowledged at the 2021 First Fresh "Freshies", where they picked up the Supreme Award. The judges said the recognition was not only for delivering high-quality fruit but also for being active in the citrus industry. "Our approach is to always improve and build on what we are already doing," says Jason. "This means enhancing quality and efficiencies, reducing waste and improving yield."

Before working full-time in the industry, it was a busy time for the family who juggled a number of roles. As well as being a full-time fireman, Jason was working on the current home block while Hannah worked as a dentist, all while raising two young children.

"I was 27 years in the Fire and Emergency Service in the UK, Palmerston North, Taupo and then Gisborne, but growing wasn't completely new to me," said Jason. "When I left school I worked on apple orchards in the Hawke's Bay."

"Because of the nature of the hours in the fire service, I was able to also work on this block at the same time, so it wasn't a complete change."

While the family has built up a decent base of knowledge, Jason admits that the transition from part-time interest to full-time commitment was somewhat of a leap-of-faith.

"We had a fair idea but didn't really know how we'd go, when we added two new properties to the home block which we already owned" said Jason. "Looking back, the new properties were a bit run-down to the point where it was difficult to get down the rows."

"We chipped away and worked at developing it. We've now pulled out most of the older trees to plant better producing varieties."

"Some growers have trees around 50 years old and they tend to grow poor fruit, while young vigorous trees grow much better fruit. If you don't keep replacing it you'll end up behind the eight-ball."

Jason works closely with the team at First Fresh, investigating innovative ways to match the crop performance to customer expectations. They've adapted their management to advance the citrus category, including putting in place industry leading practices and a real effort has been made to trial new varieties.

"It's pretty clear that the citrus industry's got a bit stale and needs some new varieties so someone has to take the risk don't they," says Jason. "If no one ever gives it a go the industry stays stagnant."

"We've pulled out most of the older trees now to make way for our experimental block."

"We've got a decent number of finger limes and new seedless lemons planted."

When asked about winning the Supreme Award at the First Fresh "Freshies" Jason joked that maybe it was his turn.

"Winning the award was really encouraging for our business," said Jason. "The time and effort is paying off."

"It's not just me and Hannah, we're lucky to have a passionate and hardworking team and they deserve a lot of the credit."

FIRST FRESH

First Fresh was formed in 1989 to pack and market an expanding volume of locally grown product, both domestically and offshore. The Gisborne based business is the largest citrus and persimmon supplier to the New Zealand market, as well as a leading exporter for these products.



* MG Marketing owns 39% of First Fresh.

FARM ENVIRONMENT PLANS PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Sustainable growing starts at the farm, led by the men and women who care about their land, the environment and natural resources

A Farm Environmental Plan (FEP) identifies aspects of the farm and its management that pose risks to the environment and lists what needs to be done to minimise those risks. It will ensure compliance to rules and regulations while ensuring growers maintain productivity and profitability.

FEPs are unique to a property and reflect the local climate, soil, water use and the type of growing operation.

A well written plan that's being implemented also demonstrates to regulators, communities and customers that growers are taking their environmental and legal responsibilities seriously.

It is anticipated that FEPs will be a legal requirement for all growers in the future with some regional councils already making them mandatory. Even in areas where they are not yet required, MG Marketing (MG) encourages growers to start developing an FEP.

Helping growers to meet FEP requirements via NZGAP EMS add-on

NZGAP has been working with regional councils and growers to develop an Environment Management System (EMS) add-on with the purpose of supporting growers to meet regulatory expectations for an FEP. This is an extension to the existing, GAP system and is designed to work alongside a growers usual NZGAP audit.

The management practices identified in the EMS have been developed from research and tested within New Zealand growing system.

This NZGAP tool simplifies the process in a clear and logical manner, covering key areas of an FEP such as risk assessment; resource use; agrichemical and fertiliser use; waste management; and biosecurity.



At MG, we understand that developing an FEP may be challenging for some growers. We encourage everyone to start by looking at the NZGAP EMS add-on.



PROVIDING A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

All employees are required to provide a safe and healthy work environment and should have a work health and safety plan that outlines how they are managing COVID-19.

Employers must assess COVID-19 related risks and implement control measures. They must also regularly review control measures to prevent or minimise exposure to these risks.

This includes:

- Identifying hazards including the potential for transmission on the worksite or hazards resulting from a worker who tests positive for COVID-19.
- Consider how workers and other individuals might be impacted.
- Determine control measures to prevent the spread of infection and regularly review the controls.

It is also important to consult and share information with employees, including about possible sources of exposure to COVID-19 and associated health risks.

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

There is a national push towards having as many New Zealanders as possible vaccinated. Current evidence shows that people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine have a much lower chance of developing more serious symptoms from COVID-19 compared to those who did not get the vaccine

Woolworths New Zealand (WWNZ) announced they've introduced a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy. The Policy requires people visiting a Countdown store or any other WWNZ site for work purposes to be fully vaccinated by 11 January 2022 (the policy does not apply to customers visiting any of their stores solely to shop).

At MG we are currently considering the role vaccines and COVID-19 testing will play in our business. This includes a health and safety risk assessment of the business and consultation with our staff.

MG MARKETING (MG) GROWER UPDATES



Grower Delivery Advice (GDA)

MG is currently rolling out a new IT system called M3. The new system requires all growers supplying MG to use the GDA web portal. The GDA is an internet-based system, that allows consignments to be logged electronically with a MG branch ahead of the produce arriving. The MG Procurement Team is happy to help and provide guidance to growers not yet using the GDA system.



Social Practice Certification

It is a requirement for all growers currently supplying Foodstuffs North Island, Countdown and Foodstuffs South Island to have a social practice certification.

MG is making it mandatory for all growers supplying our network of branches to be certified by 30 June 2022.

MG strongly urges all growers to take steps towards getting certified now. Growers can start by visiting the NZGAP website and completing the short online NZGAP Social Practice Add-On registration form followed soon after by an online self-assessment. Alternatively, you can consider GlobalG.A.P. GRASP or SMETA/SEDEX if these are preferable for your business.



RSE workers

From time-to-time growers may have RSE workers on-site earlier than required. Depending on the region and time of year, our MG branch network may be able to offer short-term work opportunities to those RSE workers. Contact MG HR Manager, Emma Thomas (ethomas@mgmarketing.co.nz) if you would like to find out more.



Cooperative Governance Development Programme

Registrations are currently open for the 2022 executive Cooperative Governance Development Programme, starting April/May. This six-month programme supports new and aspiring future governors operating within co-operative and governance environments. Funding is open for eligible participants through the Regional Business Partner Network (RBP) to receive a voucher for up to 50% off the programme.

Through MG's Cooperative Business New Zealand membership, shareholders are eligible to apply and attend.

For more information, or to register for this programme, visit the nz.coop website or contact Jo Guy at jo@mayfieldgroup.co.nz.



DEALING WITH ADVERSITY.

We often hear sports teams talk about dealing with adversity, especially during interviews when athletes describe how their side overcame challenges to win. The response generally includes working together as a team, not giving up, and not losing sight of the goal. Many say that adversity has also made their team stronger. That's how I feel about the produce sector as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and head towards our new normal.

It's fair to say that everyone throughout the supply-chain has faced adversity since the emergence of the pandemic. It's a reminder that no matter how well you plan ahead, there will always be setbacks – what matters is how well these challenges are handled.

While restrictions have eased and continue to ease, it's difficult to say definitively what the road to recovery looks like. However, it does feel like New Zealand is at a turning point in our COVID-19 recovery. While most of the country is back open for business, we now face uncharted waters as we try to understand what the post-alert level marketplace will look like.

Businesses in our sector have adapted well and remained busy, however, we need to think about how we will operate and behave, ensuring there's a plan for dealing with the post-pandemic world.

Every business in New Zealand will have a different story, based on the challenges they face. For some it will mean letting go of the good-old-days in order to move forward into a completely new future. For most of us it won't mean large-scale changes, but might mean making significant adjustments to the way we interact and how we transact business.

While there is still uncertainty about the future, we need to remind ourselves that adversity is not something to be faced alone. Working as a team is essential to overcome adversity

and there will be people and organisations connected to your business who you can lean on. At MG we pride ourselves on having strong relationships throughout the supply-chain and welcome the opportunity to support our business partners.

Overcoming adversity also requires patience and endurance. As we've experienced with COVID-19, it is not always clear how long it will take to overcome a challenge - adversity involves change that is not predictable.

Lastly, like successful sports teams, successful businesses are the ones who have been able to keep a cool head, reassess, work together and seek help to get the right outcome.

A word of thanks

On 20 September 2021 a fire broke out in our Auckland Branch. Importantly, when the alarm sounded, everyone evacuated the building safely.

The Fire and Emergency Service arrived swiftly and were able to contain the fire. While there is significant damage to our banana holding rooms, the main market floor was not directly impacted. The Fire and Emergency Service remained overnight to ensure the site was safe and were comfortable for the branch to be back operational the following morning.

We were overwhelmed with messages of support from right across the sector. While there's too many to mention individually, I would like to acknowledge the many businesses who extended genuine offers of assistance, including access to warehouse space and ripening facilities.

With the support of the New Zealand Fire and Emergency Service, we were fortunate to be able to overcome the disruption and remain on-site.

I thank the many individuals and businesses who sent messages and offered or provided assistance, both immediately following the fire and in the subsequent weeks.

I would also like to specifically thank our loyal growers and customers who continued to work alongside our Auckland team as soon as we reopened.

® Together.Stronger.

Peter Hendry - CEO



Keep kids safe this summer

The horticulture industry doesn't go on holiday over the summer season and it's a time when children and young people are often more often on-site and involved in farming activities.

It's important to be aware of the dangers, including farm machinery, chemicals, quad bikes and other farm vehicles. One of the most significant risks to children is drowning, while other potential hazards include contact with electricity, falls from heights, even noise.

New Zealand Health and Safety laws require growers to take every reasonable step to ensure that workers and other people in their workplace are not exposed to risks to health and safety.

Children and young people learn by watching others, so make sure you model safe behaviour. It's also a good idea to take the time to look around your farm and try to see things from a child's point of view.

MG MARKETING CHARITABLE TRUST



↑ Trustees, Trudi Webb, John Clarke (Chair), Mike Russell, Cathrine Lewis and Alastair Hercus.

The MG Marketing Charitable Trust (MG Trust) launched earlier this year to contribute towards the general improvement, capability and profile of the horticulture industry in New Zealand.

While the MG Trust will be supported by MG Marketing, it is run independently, with four Grower Trustees and one Independent Trustee making key decisions about how funding is allocated.

The inaugural funding meeting took place on 1 November 2021 with funding allocated to the following six projects:

Organisation	Project
Katikati Innovation Hort Trust	Horticulture innovation centre development
HortNZ GoHort	Virtual field trip – LEARNZ contracting services
Maara Fresh (Maurewa School)	Horticulture equipment to support education programme
NZ Asparagus Council	Variety trial project
Ohakune Growers Group	Maintenance and repair to Carrot Park
Perfectly Imperfect Trust	Development of new digital platform

The next funding round will take place in June 2022 with the deadline for applications being 23 May 2022.

MG Marketing Charitable Trust
Rabobank Farm Managers
Programme Grower education fund



The MG Marketing Charitable Trust (MG Trust) has also introduced a \$20,000 education fund to support current growers and/or their employees to attend the upcoming Rabobank Farm Managers Programme.

19 - 24 June 2022, Christchurch.

This initiative aligns with the MG Trust's objective to advance the education of people within the horticulture industry and up-to four subsidised places (\$5,000.00 per place) are being offered for the next intake.

The Trustees encourage current growers and their employees to apply if they have been in a management role for more than three years and would like to increase skills in leadership, business planning, people management and financial analysis.

The deadline for applications is the 4 March 2022.

For further information about the MG Trust and to download applications forms visit:

www.mgmarketing.co.nz/mgtrust