

Ross Tanner

"I really enjoy talking to growers and orchard managers about what needs to be done on their orchards and how best to tackle any problems."

Current position in the kiwifruit industry –

I own and run Tanner Spraying Ltd which is a contract spraying business.

What does your role involve?

As a spray contractor we spray in excess of 400 hectares of kiwifruit – a mix of both green and gold. We also spray 200 hectares of avocados, and we spread fertiliser, weed spray and we mow and mulch orchards.

In my role as owner operator, my team of six staff and I do everything. This includes talking to the growers and managers about what needs to be sprayed and how sprays need to be timed to meet the requirements of the crop protection programme. We inform orchard neighbours about when we will be spraying. We make sure spray machines are calibrated and serviced and we enter information into the Zespri spray diary system.

What was your career path?

In 1980, when I was just eight, my dad bought a kiwifruit orchard in Katikati. He would get us kids out on the orchard to help with picking and any other easy jobs like raking the canes from around the vines and when I turned 15 he got me out on the tractor mowing and spraying. My parents were partners in Birchwood and Country Coolers Packhouses when they first were built, and so I would work in those each harvest too.

After school I did an apprenticeship as a mechanic and then went and drove trucks for a few years before doing my OE to England. In 2004, I started work for my father-in-law on his kiwifruit and avocado orchard, and I completed a horticulture course at Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and got my level 4 in horticulture.

In 2005 an opportunity arose to start my own spray company, so I bought a new tractor and sprayer and began Tanner Spraying Ltd, spraying about 30 hectares of kiwifruit for neighbours around Ongare point in Katikati. In my second year of business, I had two sprayers doing around 140 hectares. The business has grown considerably over the years. I put our success down to providing good service and listening to what the grower and industry expect.

What do you like about working within the kiwifruit industry?

Over the last few years, Psa has made the job very busy and stressful at times but the whole industry has worked together and the future is looking good.



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Zespri Kiwifruit is one of the most nutritious fruits, with a powerful combination of fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals without the calories