

Sophie Headley

"It is the energy of the team, fast pace of work and new challenges that come up each year that keeps it exciting."

Current position in the kiwifruit industry

Zespri Orchard Productivity Extension Leader

Who do you work for?

Zespri International Limited

What does your role involve?

I am focussed on delivering extension programmes to industry specifically through designing and delivering events which aim to help growers continue to grow the world's best kiwifruit and get the most from their orchard.

What was your career path?

After finishing school in England, I went on my OE and spent eight months in Australia before returning to England to complete a degree in Psychology and Linguistics. Shortly after graduating I moved to New Zealand (with a Kiwi I had met on my travels in Australia). I started working for Zespri in 2006, when I was 23, as Technical Assistant. I helped with the on-vessel conditioning programme, in-market quality assessment programme and Zespri's packaging team. I remained in the technical team for seven years, in different roles including Technical Analyst and Global Packaging Coordinator.

In 2013, I took an opportunity to move in to the communications team at Zespri which aims to inform and engage growers and the wider industry through publications and online channels. In 2017, I joined the OPC team, which combines my technical and communications skills. OPC works to empower Zespri growers to make continuous productivity and quality improvements, increasing orchard profitability. By working with other Zespri departments, scientists and key industry stakeholders the team is responsible for information transfer and helping growers to adopt new or improved practices.

What do you like about working within the kiwifruit industry?

I love being part of an exciting, cohesive kiwifruit community. We all come together to work hard and deliver the world's best kiwifruit. It's great to be a part of a team that makes a hairy brown fruit appealing to the world.

I have worked for Zespri for over eleven years now. Zespri has great people and a good internal culture which makes it a great place to work.

OPC Extension Leader

Sophie Headley

"I love being part of an exciting, cohesive kiwifruit community."

One kiwifruit contains as much potassium as a banana—important for athletes