

New Zealand Food Network teams up with kiwifruit industry to rescue kiwifruit

27 May 2025 | News

With the support of Zespri and in partnership with a nationwide network of packhouses, NZFN is leading the charge to increase access to nutritious kai and reduce food waste in the agriculture sector



With the support of Zespri and in partnership with a nationwide network of packhouses, NZFN is leading the charge to increase access to nutritious kai and reduce food waste in the agriculture sector

New Zealand Food Network (NZFN), the country's largest food support charity and national food rescue, is working with the kiwifruit industry this season to help feed communities in need.

NZFN and its packhouse partners rescued and redistributed 160 tonnes of kiwifruit in 2024, and there continues to be growing demand for support to get healthy food into vulnerable New Zealand communities.

With the support of Zespri and in partnership with a nationwide network of packhouses, NZFN is leading the charge to increase access to nutritious kai and reduce food waste in the agriculture sector.

NZFN Chief Executive, Gavin Findlay, says, "Fresh produce must pass through many hoops before it ends up on the supermarket shelves, such as needing to last long export journeys, or meeting quality standards" meaning some of the annual harvest doesn't make the cut but is still good to eat. With the help of our network of incredible organisations, we're making sure that it's going towards nourishing Kiwis who need it most.

Kiwifruit is among the most nutrient-dense fruits available, with a single gold kiwifruit providing an entire day's worth of vitamin C. Since the rescue effort began in April, NZFN has already distributed kiwifruit to more than 80 organisations across the country.

The popular red kiwifruit started arriving at NZFN at the beginning of March from Seeka to be redistributed to its 65 nationwide Food Hubs, which support local organisations on the front lines. Around 150 bins of red kiwifruit were processed and sent to Kiwis in need. Gold kiwifruit processing and distribution are now underway.

Zespri, the world's largest marketer of kiwifruit and long-time partner of NZFN, is supporting the rescue efforts.

“Food insecurity remains a critical issue for many New Zealanders,” says Findlay.

“With many of our Food Hubs struggling with stock levels, collaboration between the private and public sector is important to plug those gaps in supply and ensure that good, nutritious produce is going to communities in need rather than ending up in the bin.”