



THE KIWIFRUIT CLAIM

MEDIA STATEMENT

Thursday 20 August 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INFORMATION CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE 9 OCTOBER 2015 DEADLINE

The Kiwifruit Claim will launch a five-week information campaign next month to inform kiwifruit growers of the 9 October deadline to sign up to its efforts to seek compensation for the Crown's negligence in allowing Psa-v into New Zealand.

The information campaign will involve direct mail, billboards in prime kiwifruit country, plaintiffs' meeting in Te Puke, Opotiki and Northland, and the claim's website at www.TheKiwifruitClaim.org.

Last month, the High Court at Wellington ordered that the claim is to proceed, approving the terms of the funding, and setting Friday 9 October as the absolute final deadline for growers to sign up.

A spokesman for The Kiwifruit Claim, Matthew Hooton, said it was totally up to growers whether or not to become part of the claim.

"So far, 30% of gold growers and over 10% of green growers have joined The Kiwifruit Claim. They're all claiming loss as a result of Psa-v. Types of loss for growers to recover include loss of income, drop in orchard value, increased spraying costs, new variety licences, higher bank fees, and costs of re-grafting. It's not limited to this, but these are good examples for growers to consider when thinking about signing up to the Claim," he said.

Mr Hooton said it was important growers left plenty of time to properly consider the matter.

“By close-of-business on 9 October, you need to have obtained the sign-up documents from www.TheKiwifruitClaim.org, read them carefully, taken independent advice from your own lawyer, and got the signed documents back to us.”

Mr Hooton stressed that if growers did decide to sign up, their personal liability was limited to the initial one-off fee.

“The way this is structured is that all personal liability is limited to their initial one-off fee of \$500 to \$1500. All legal fees are being met by 100% kiwi-owned LPF Group Limited, that will initially post \$250,000 in security to cover any award of costs, and more as the case progresses to the satisfaction of the judge.”

Kiwifruit growers and New Zealand lost at least \$885 million as a result of the Psa crisis according to the government’s own Sapere report. The Kiwifruit Claim claims significant losses were caused to growers and post-harvest operators by Biosecurity NZ’s negligence when it allowed importation of pollen carrying infected material, and it is confident with this evidence.

“While things are looking up for the industry now, we believe it is important Biosecurity NZ (now part of MPI) is held to account to stop something like this happening again to any other primary industry,” Mr Hooton said.

“Kiwifruit growers, like any other New Zealander, deserve full and final compensation when the Crown’s negligence cost them money, even if it was way back in 2010.”

END

Inquiries: Matthew Hooton
Exceltium Ltd
021 766031

Vanessa Wills
Exceltium Ltd
021 2226628