**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**11 September 2015**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELASE**

**GOVERNMENT’S $25M BOAST INSULTS KIWIFRUIT GROWERS**

The government’s boast in parliament yesterday that it has provided $25 million in compensation for the 2010 Psa-v outbreak is an insult to kiwifruit growers and others who lost at least $885 million as a result of the preventable incursion, The Kiwifruit Claim said today.

This week marks one month to go before the High Court-imposed deadline of 9 October for kiwifruit growers and post-harvest operators to join The Kiwifruit Claim’s class action against the government to recover damages caused by the outbreak.

Yesterday in Parliament, Bay of Plenty MP Todd Muller asked Primary Industries Minister Nathan Guy a patsy question about the state of the industry, prompting Mr Guy to claim credit for its recent recovery.

“If Mr Guy wants to claim credit for the recovery, it would be nice if he would also admit - as we believe we are able to prove - that the negligence of his biosecurity officials in allowing infected anthers to be imported into New Zealand from China in June 2009 caused the Psa-v crisis in the first place,” Matthew Hooton, a spokesman for the Kiwifruit Claim said today. “This happened at a time of heightened concern about Psa-v as a result of the Italian crisis, when officials should have been exercising extra care.

“Earlier this week University of Auckland law professor Bill Hodge commented that he believes the claim is able to show the direct causal nexus between that negligence and growers’ losses and that may be the smoking gun that will lead to a successful outcome.

“This is not new information and was clearly outlined on television as far back as 2012 by Benedict Collins at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8JSzSsGM_8>. It would be good if Mr Guy took five minutes out of his day to become properly informed on the issue by viewing Mr Collins’ investigative report.”

Mr Hooton said kiwifruit growers, post-harvest operators and Zespri had done a good job recovering from the 2010 crisis which destroyed the nation’s gold (Hort16A) kiwifruit crop, requiring it to be replaced with another variety (G3), but says that does not mean they do not deserve proper compensation for the horrendous losses they experienced in the meantime as a result of the Crown’s negligence.

“Boasting of a $25 million compensation package is an insult and just because all this was now five years ago is no reason the Crown should not be held responsible and pay compensation if the courts accept our evidence of negligence.”

Growers and post-harvest operators affected by the outbreak can sign up to The Kiwifruit Claim at [www.thekiwifruitclaim.org](http://www.thekiwifruitclaim.org). They must pay a one-off payment of $500, $1000 or $1500 depending on orchard size. Regardless of outcome, growers will not be required to pay anything more than their one-off initial payment. Growers and post-harvest operators are strongly recommended to read the statement of claim and all relevant documents and to seek their own independent legal advice before signing up to the claim. All growers must sign up to the claim before 9 October to be eligible for any compensation.

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