

Where is the industry nOW and where is it going?

INSIGHTS FROM JAMIE LUNAM, GENERAL MANAGER

I unashamedly promote myself as an agribusiness ambassador. This comes with its challenges when people assume that I must also be a fan of abusing our natural resources to extract maximum revenue. But this couldn't be further from the truth.

Along with being a big advocate for New Zealand horticulture and the agri sector in general, slotting in on top of that is my drive for sustainability. I am not a fan of the 'S' word to be frank, as it has the wrong connotations. When I talk about sustainability, I am referring to the fact that we have massive resources at our disposal and an opportunity to convert those resources into wealth for our nation, and all those in it. If we do not undertake that conversion in a way that will see that wealth ratchet and continue to deliver for us, then we are dead in the water.

We could get fluffy about it and talk about leaving the planet in better shape than we found it or making sure our children and our children's children have a nice world to enjoy in decades to come, but I am what I call a 'green socialist capitalist'. It is not easy to put those three words in the same sentence!

While it is not easy to achieve, it is relatively easy to describe: We have a unique set of attributes in New Zealand that much of the world is eager to lap up. Leave the commodities to the global traders and deliver NZ Inc to restaurant and dining tables around the world. We can take the best, most environmentally pragmatic approach to growing and delivering food, balance it with delivering returns well above global averages and use the wealth generated to grow a happy, healthy nation. A nation of industry leading experts that are resourced and equipped to keep ratcheting on our unique competitive advantages decade after decade.

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When our growers turn up with the finest produce, it is our responsibility to make sure that those products stay in top condition for as long as possible, are presented head and shoulders above their commodity counterparts in market, transport our brands and provenance with them into the consumers hands and do so in the most circular way possible. As many of our inputs as possible need to keep going around and around in the economy.

It is this thinking that gave birth to our Enviro Pac™ brand a decade ago and it is what drives the vast majority of the development work we do in packaging. While we work hard to deliver sustainable packaging solutions to our customers, we work twice as hard behind the scenes being a meaningful part of trying to shape what will hopefully be a much more circular approach to packaging in horticulture in the future. We are active in all major industry bodies and advocating at central and local government level to ensure the right decisions are being made to balance commercial common sense with reducing waste to landfill ratios and keeping costs under control. This balance is critical to ensure returns are kept as high as possible to fund continual development.

Banning single use bags is one angle we can take. Educating our consumers and our key industry decision makers on science based best practice and whole of lifecycle ROI would be another.

Jamie Lunam
General Manager, Jenkins Freshpac Systems