

Fresh Graduate to Kiwifruit Orchard Manager

Ashdon Reid is a recent graduate of Lincoln University with a Bachelor of Commerce, and he is devoted to all things kiwifruit – he has been with Southern Cross Horticulture for just over a year, and even though he is still fresh out of university, he is already succeeding in his role of Orchard Manager.



Although he jokes that he's the "graduate" at the company, his lifetime of experience in the kiwifruit industry is a major factor in his success, and his rapid growth. Growing up on the orchards and building fond childhood memories has made the industry second nature to him, and he loves working in the field.

"In the kiwifruit industry, I sort of jumped in because my parents have been involved for a long time and I grew up on the orchards, and worked on them during my breaks and holidays and simply fell in love with it," Reid says. Reid admits that he did try out a few other industries and laughs as if his return to the orchards was inevitable. *"During uni, I tried a lot of other jobs, agricultural contracting, dairy farming, but just kept coming back to kiwifruit. When I saw an opportunity come up with Southern Cross, I decided to take it,"* he says.

At Southern Cross Horticulture, Reid is responsible for managing multiple orchards at their Edgecumbe site. He not only looks after the blocks and the fruit, he also manages and supports the teams of people working there and is involved in all aspects of the orchards' operations. In addition to his orchard management duties, Reid helps with administrative tasks, such as developing newsletters and organizing information for Southern Cross' audiences and customers.

Considering that the New Zealand kiwifruit industry is a major contributor to the country's economy, with exports valued at over \$4 billion in 2021, Reid has plenty to draw on for his newsletters. The industry employs thousands of people, and is a vital part of the country's rural economy, thus the importance of sharing the message. Between his communications responsibilities and on-site management role, Reid stays busy, and shares that every day is different in his role. Fortunately, he enjoys the variety of tasks. Some days he's out in the orchard doing the "hard yards," other days he is in the office helping with invoicing and customer communications. During harvest season, Reid proudly shares that, "everyone works together to gather the crop."

There's no doubt that the amount of time spent outdoors plays a significant role in Reid's enthusiasm for the job. He says, *"I love the fact that I get to work outside every day, in the beautiful Bay of Plenty, I love the fact that I'm my own boss, so to speak. I get to manage and run my own time and look after the orchards the way I want to."*

Reid's experience and passion for the kiwifruit industry make him a perfect fit at Southern Cross Horticulture, and he is a shining example of the opportunities available in the field for those with the right skills and attitude. His thoughts for anyone out there considering the kiwifruit industry is to, *"Give it a crack! It doesn't matter where you come in, it's so progressive but it's also very linear. You can move between orchards, working post-harvest, and anywhere in between. The experience is so easy and linear and valued throughout the whole chain."*

