



By Carl Collen

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## NZ kiwi industry thanks government



Government's efforts in supporting the industry through the country's Psa outbreak have been praised

New Zealand's kiwifruit industry came together this week to thank the country's government for its support with efforts to manage the bacterial disease Psa, which first hit the country in 2010.

Prime Minister John Key visited Zespri's Mt Maunganui office on Tuesday (12 May), allowing Zespri chairman Peter McBride – along with senior representatives of postharvest, growers and industry organisations – the opportunity to show the Prime Minister how far the industry has come since Psa was first discovered in New Zealand.

"It's hard to recall now just how uncertain and dark those days were, when we simply did not know how the industry could continue with Psa," explained McBride.

"What was in no doubt however was the support of the government: within days of Psa's discovery in NZ, the government had committed NZ\$25m – matched dollar for dollar by industry – for R&D into managing the disease and grower support.

"Now, volumes of kiwifruit are back to pre-Psa levels, grower returns are strong, orchard prices are back to and in some cases surpassing pre-Psa values, and our new higher-value gold variety Zespri SunGold (Gold3) is proving itself in the orchard and in the market," he noted.

During the visit, McBride presented the Prime Minister with a kiwifruit carving on behalf of the industry as a token of gratitude for the government's support.

"Thanks to the government's strong support – together with our unified industry structure, the resilience of our growers and the support of the banks – our industry is not just back on track, we're set for strong growth," he added.

Key took time to talk with industry representatives and Zespri staff at the event, and was also shown Zespri's additional new temporary office which will open shortly, housing around 60 people.