

## New Zealand kicks off kiwifruit harvest

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The record crop of just over 200 million trays of kiwifruit to be harvested over the coming months New Zealand has kicked off its earliest and largest ever kiwifruit harvest, which will break the 200 million tray milestone this year, indicates New Zealand Kiwifruit Growers Incorporated (NZKGI).

The first fruit was picked in the Bay of Plenty on New Zealand's North Island, marking the earliest-ever harvest. The harvest traditionally peaks in mid-April and runs until June, according to the NZKGI.

Zespri's sweet, berry-flavored RubyRed™ is the first variety picked for supermarket shelves in New Zealand and some overseas markets, followed shortly by the gold and green varieties.

The record crop of just over 200 million trays of kiwifruit to be harvested over the coming months, would be a modest increase from last year's record-breaking season of more than 190 million trays, said the agricultural cooperative. On average, each tray has around 30 pieces of Kiwifruit.

"Overall, growers have experienced an excellent lead-up to harvest with ideal sun and little wind to produce excellent kiwifruit," said NZKGI CEO Colin Bond, acknowledging "those Tasman and Whakatane growers who received significant hail damage at the end of last December."

Zespri CEO Jason Te Brake said their customers and teams in the market have come off a strong 2024 season, and are ready to begin sales strongly in the coming months.

Being New Zealand horticulture's largest export, the kiwifruit industry is also significant to the wider regions in which kiwifruit is grown. In the 2023-2024 season, kiwifruit growers contributed some \$2.2 billion NZ dollars (\$1.24 billion U.S. dollars) to the local economy, according to the NZKGI.