

Zac Hanley

General Manager New Cultivar Innovation

The New Zealand Institute for Plant and Food Research Limited



The New Zealand Institute for Plant and Food Research Limited (Plant & Food Research) is a Crown Research Institute (CRI) formed in 2008 from the amalgamation of two other New Zealand CRIs. As a CRI, it is a government-owned company operating as a corporate entity. Our purpose is to enhance the value and productivity of New Zealand's horticultural, arable, seafood, and food and beverage industries, to contribute to economic growth and the environmental and social prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand. Plant & Food Research operates a wide variety of plant breeding programmes in the fruit, arable, and ornamental sectors with breeding programmes located both in Aotearoa New Zealand and offshore.

As General Manager New Cultivar Innovation, I lead a portfolio of 180 scientists working across crops of importance to Aotearoa New Zealand, from fundamental studies in traits to the breeding of new varieties. We aim to develop better cultivars faster so that our country and our strategic partners remain internationally recognized as smart, green, and ready for global changes in science, society, and climate. My PhD from the University of Sheffield (UK) is in plant molecular biology and I hold a Postgraduate Certificate in plant breeding from Massey University (NZ). I have been with Plant & Food Research since 2014, first leading the Kiwifruit New Cultivar science area before becoming General Manager New Cultivar Innovation in 2018.