



Growing Future Horticulturalists Internship Programme Impact Evaluation

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Background

- Trial internship programme designed for secondary school students in years 11–13.
- Sponsored by Mr Apple, Hawke's Bay Fruitgrowers' Association, and Sow the Seed.
- Aim is to provide valuable industry exposure for school students.

Goals of the Programme

1. Enhance employment opportunities for school leavers and generate interest in primary industry careers.
2. Immerse students in the horticulture industry, offering them practical experience and insights that can influence their career trajectories.





Evaluation Purpose

- Assess the programme's impact on students' career pathway choices
- Identify benefits of the internship experience for students, schools, and the food and fibre industry.
- Analyse the programme processes to understand what is working well, what could be improved, and what opportunities might be missing.
- Develop a base model that other food and fibre sectors can adopt and adapt to implement a similar programme.



Programme Overview

Week 1:

- Welcome and meet the team; overview of programme.
- Day in Head Office; Start orchard thinning.

Week 2:

- Meet Orchard manager; Shadow orchard foreman.

Week 3:

- Shadow Assistant manager.

Week 4:

- Day in packhouse; Meet Quality & Lab manager; Fruit testing.

Week 5:

- Meet Security, Forklift & Vehicle manager.

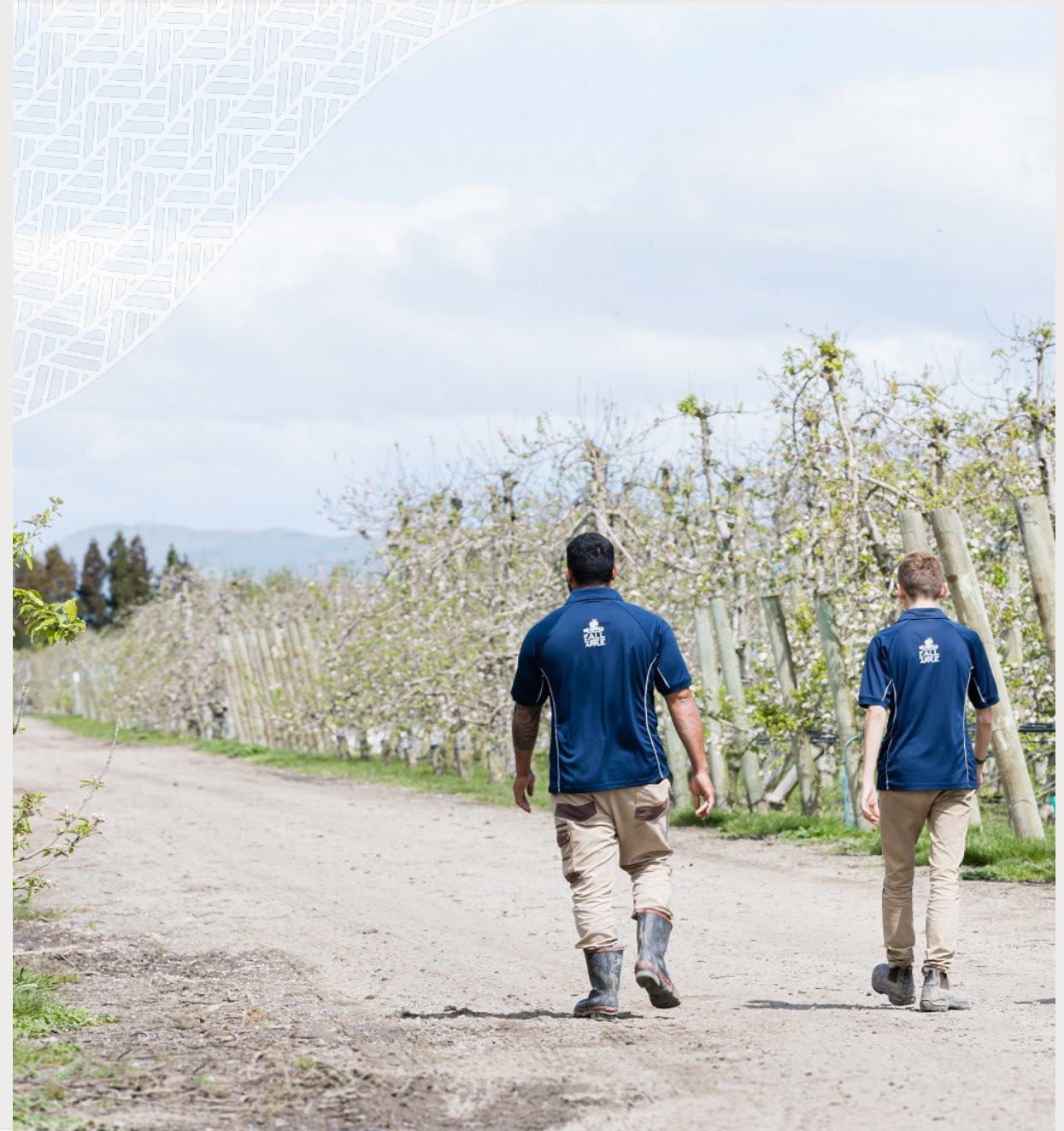
Week 6:

- Meet Head of Coolstores, Logistics & Engineering; Tour coolstores.



Methodology

- Qualitative evaluation using semi-structured interviews.
- 9 Stakeholders:
 - Student interns & parents.
 - Programme founder.
 - Programme Coordinator and sponsor, Sow the Seed Advisor.
 - Mr Apple Talent Engagement Manager and management team.
 - CEO of HB Fruitgrowers' Association.
- Assessment criteria based on Food & Fibre CoVE Vocational Excellence Rubrics.



Food and Fibre CoVE Vocational Excellence Rubrics

- Ensured a structured and reliable assessment of the programme's effectiveness.
- Guided the identification of programme structures and processes that effectively support interns in their learning and career pathway choices.
- Highlighted examples of good practice within the proposed programme model.

Five rubrics applied:

- Work-based Learning
- Face to face Learning
- Pastoral Care
- Mentorship
- Employers and Industry Bodies



Pastoral care

Attribute	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Participation and access Holistic and culturally responsive pastoral care drives parity of participation and access. Providers understand the value of providing pastoral care, enhancing wellbeing and outcomes in learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral care is available for learners during the learning programme. Learners are aware of the available pastoral support and ways to access it. All stakeholders in the system are aware of the benefits of pastoral care systems and processes. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral care is available for all learners regardless of modes of delivery. Learners can access throughout learning journey, including pre and post learning (e.g., to help potential learners identify correct learning programmes). All stakeholders in the system actively seek to utilise pastoral care systems and processes. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bespoke, holistic pastoral care is available to suit different needs and preferences (e.g., covers academic, cultural, emotional needs, is responsive to where learners are on their learning/career pathway). All stakeholders in the system are consistent in their implementation of pastoral care systems and processes.
Systems Systems are in place to ensure pastoral care meets learners needs and is monitored to ensure outcomes are achieved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are seeking opportunities to provide pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with learners to ensure the pastoral care provided meets their needs. Monitoring participation to ensure all learners are equally supported. 	<i>As for Acceptable, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are actively seeking opportunities to provide pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with local communities to provide input into, or deliver culturally relevant interventions (e.g., mentorship programmes). Monitoring and reviewing their systems to ensure all learners are equally supported. 	<i>As for Good, plus</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are actively seeking opportunities to provide personalised pastoral care by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with learners to address their individual needs. Engaging with learners, local representative groups, organisations and communities to input into or deliver culturally relevant interventions. Monitoring participation to ensure all learners are equally supported; using metrics to continually inform/update the delivery model; monitoring risks of discontinued activities and actively mitigating risks.



Findings: Programme Impact

- Students gained hands-on experience and career insights.
- Industry alliance between host organisation and programme coordinator provided integrated learning opportunities for interns.
- Mentorship and pastoral care played a key role in the interns' experiences.
- The programme enhanced industry visibility and workforce pipeline potential.



Findings: Programme Impact

- Students' increased awareness of horticultural careers and academic pathways.
- Positive feedback from students, parents, and industry partners.
- Potential to serve as a model for other food & fibre sectors.
- Provides an opportunity to strengthen collaboration between schools and industry.
- Financial incentives help promote broader student participation and a sustainable programme model.



Challenges & Opportunities

- Maintaining student engagement throughout the programme.
- Need for improved communication and school involvement.
- Securing sustainable funding and broadening industry partnerships.
- Enhancing structured learning elements and mentorship support within the programme.





Recommendations

- Strengthen partnerships with tertiary institutions and industry bodies.
- Introduce micro-credentials and project-based learning opportunities.
- Increase promotional efforts to attract diverse student participation.
- Ensure ongoing programme evaluation for continuous improvement.
- Implement a two-round structure to optimise learning.

Conclusion

The GFH internship programme successfully provided students with industry exposure.

Evaluation findings support its continuation and scalability.

Key improvements can enhance its sustainability and effectiveness.

Next steps: Implement recommendations, secure long-term support, and refine programme structure.





Output: Process Model

- Embeds Food & Fibre CoVE Vocational Excellence Rubrics.
- Scalable and adaptable for other food & fibre sectors.

Key Components:

- Work-based learning and technical competency development.
- Face-to-face learning and industry mentoring.
- Strong pastoral care support for interns.
- Employer and industry collaboration.

Proposed two-round internship structure:

Round 1: Foundational learning, industry exposure, and core modules.

Round 2: Advanced training, elective modules, and project presentations.



Phase II

Growing Future Horticulturalists Internship Resource Toolkit

- Environmental scan to identify and assess the effectiveness of existing internship tools and resources (e.g., orientation, training, and pastoral care templates).
- Adapt existing tools and resources for food and fibre pan-sector application.
- Align resource development with principles that support successful internship outcomes in food and fibre sectors.
- Test resources: Gather input from key stakeholders (e.g., programme administrators, host organisations, etc) to evaluate relevance, ease of use, and measurable outcomes.



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