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COAST & COUNTRY NEWS

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Kiwifruit answer to uncomfortable problem

It's expected that effluent will be on the agenda at most dairy industry events but it's not often that an after-lunch speaker at an international seminar will not only talk about, but also show images of, human stools.

However, that's just what happened when Professor Richard Geary addressed the First International Symposium on Kiwifruit and Health in Tauranga in April – see page 3.

To illustrate parts of his address, explaining the multi-centre clinical trial on the effects of kiwifruit on digestive and gut health functions, he used images of the Bristol Stool Form Scale. Developed by researchers at the Bristol Royal Infirmary – a hospital in Bristol, England – the scale is a visual guide to the different types of human stools.

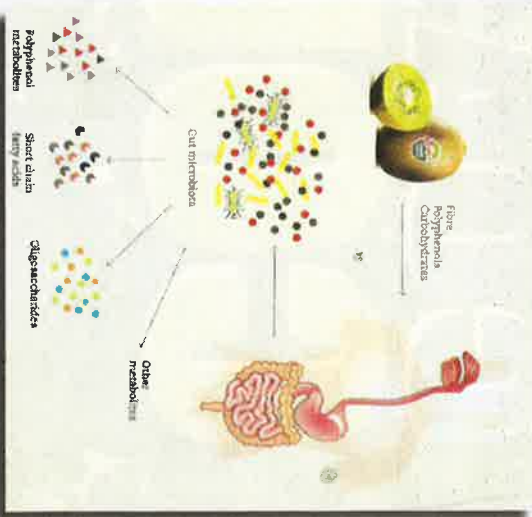
Intervention

Not the most comfortable topic or illustration it has to be said, but according to Richard, digestive discomfort, including constipation, affects at least 15 per cent of adults in the western world.

It's a serious problem, he says, affecting quality of life and general wellbeing. Current interventions for gastrointestinal conditions include lifestyle and dietary modifications as well as pharmacological interventions, which may cause side effects.

However, the ongoing research suggests eating kiwifruit "may be effective for the treatment of constipation or functional bowel disorders as well as an effective strategy to regulate the digestive system and enhance bowel movement satisfaction."

An excellent result in more ways than one – the challenge now is to impart this information to



Kiwifruit has been shown to have a beneficial effect on gut microbiota as illustrated in this slide presented at the symposium.

consumers worldwide, using it, along with other important health findings, to encourage them to eat more kiwifruit – the Zespri-branded ones in particular. Zespri's science and marketing team says while New Zealanders might be a bit coy about discussing bowel movements, in many other countries, Spain in particular, messages about bowel health are readily accepted. Leading edge research is something NZ's primary industries often excel at and much of what's new and what's hot will once again be on show at the 2016 Fieldays at Mystery Creek – see pages 26 to 38. The dairy industry's brightest and best young farmers compete this month for national titles – meet three of the contenders on pages 14 to 16.

Elaine Fisher