



Industry Spotlight: Marius Bruin

For Marius, no two days look the same. As an Orchard Manager at Baygold Holdings Ltd, he balances planning, problem solving, and people management, often all before lunch. It's a role that blends science and strategy with the satisfaction of seeing real results grow on the vine, and one that offers opportunity for anyone ready to think big.

Marius' pathway into horticulture began early. He attended Pukekohe High School for five years of his secondary education, where a strong interest in science led him toward agriculture and horticulture. Applied Science, in particular, captured his attention, offering a practical way to see theory translated into real-world outcomes.

A key influence during this time was Agricultural and Horticultural Science teacher Susan Stokes, who opened students' eyes to the vast range of opportunities within the sector and helped shape Marius's understanding of what a career in the sector could look like.

That early exposure highlighted two lessons that have stayed with him throughout his career. The first was the sheer breadth of employment

opportunities in the sector. The second was the sector's fundamental role in feeding the world, providing long-term career security in an industry enhanced, rather than replaced, by technology and innovation.

After graduating from Pukekohe High School, Marius went on to study at Massey University, completing a Bachelor of AgriScience majoring in Horticulture. Initially, the path ahead did not feel entirely clear. The small circle of visible opportunities and perceived long-term limitations in the primary sector gave pause. However, the desire to be part of a global challenge: increasing food production while reducing the agricultural and horticultural footprint.

During his university years, Marius also realised he wanted variety in his career and valued spending time outdoors as part of his working week.

A pivotal moment came during a Horticultural Science field trip organised by Zespri, where Marius gained firsthand insight into the breadth of careers available within the kiwifruit industry. Through professional networking on the trip, he established a

key industry connection that later helped him secure an entry role as a training manager. From there, consistent dedication and professional growth saw him progress into senior leadership within the sector.

Today, Marius manages the demands of the orchard with precision. His days involve everything from planning spray programmes around the weather to managing machinery, budgets, and labour. Monitoring vine health, coordinating harvests, and responding to unexpected challenges are all part of the fast-paced environment he thrives in.

"It is my prerogative to schedule my day, so if I have 100 things to do, it's about prioritising and running the day with purpose. I am responsible for my own week. So for me it's all about time management."

Marius' management style is built on clear communication, and a genuine effort to connect with his team. Marius believes trust is the foundation of good leadership, creating an environment where people feel respected and motivated to work toward shared goals.

"Learning to connect with your team is vital. That connection is what builds trust and that trust from your team is what makes you a good manager."

Marius' role reflects the scale and influence of orchard management within the kiwifruit industry. Managing 79 hectares, he produces fruit worth over \$10 million annually and supports employment for up to 200 people, while also contributing to a wider network of service industries.

What continues to motivate him is the tangible nature of the work, today's inputs lead to visible results tomorrow. With New Zealand's kiwifruit industry driven by innovation and growing global demand, Marius sees strong opportunities ahead.

"Horticulture is a growing industry. As the population increases, our fruit needs to as well so there is loads of opportunity for young people to get amongst it and grow with this vital sector."

As an industry professional, Marius sees horticulture booming. Rising populations boost fruit demand, creating opportunities to innovate and thrive in a sector that nourishes communities.