

TOWERS, James



Candidate profile

As a kiwifruit grower and Director of the Waitotara Kiwifruit General Partnership Limited (21 canopy ha 20 minutes west of Whanganui), I understand firsthand the importance of protecting the long-term health, productivity, and profitability of our industry.

For more than 40 years, I have worked across New Zealand and internationally in agriculture, leading businesses, managing large farming operations, and delivering projects focused on improving productivity, sustainability, and resilience. Throughout my career I have remained focused on achieving practical outcomes, building strong relationships, and helping people adapt successfully to change.

Biosecurity is fundamental to the future of the kiwifruit industry. During my time with AgResearch one of my roles was overseeing the Tuberculosis Cattle Quarantine Centre at Kaitoke, operating within strict biosecurity, compliance, and risk management frameworks. In addition, my

work across Africa and Asia has exposed me to the challenges of managing transboundary animal diseases, in particular Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), one of the world's most significant livestock biosecurity risks. Working alongside government agencies, farmers, veterinarians, and international development organisations reinforced the importance of strong biosecurity systems, stakeholder collaboration, farmer education, and effective mitigation and containment strategies.

These experiences highlight that biosecurity is not just about managing today's risks but about anticipating tomorrow's threats. The same principles apply to the kiwifruit industry. Protecting our orchards, our livelihoods, and New Zealand's reputation as a trusted supplier requires vigilance, sound science, strong governance, and the confidence of growers. These are the values and experiences I would bring to the KVH Board.

I am known for being practical, approachable, and willing to listen. I value clear communication, accountability, and collaboration. I believe strong grower representation is essential, and I will ensure that growers remain at the centre of KVH decision-making.

James Towers