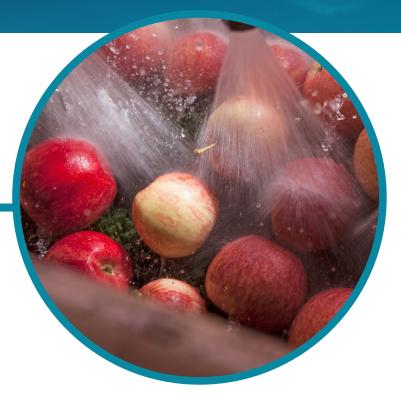# Food safety for challenging markets

Snapshot

Industry partner: New Zealand Apples and Pears Inc

Project length: 3 years

Start date: July 2019

Estimated completion date: July 2022

Industry funding: $419,090

MPI funding: $596,854

New Zealand Apples and Pears Inc is investigating new procedures and will develop best practice guidelines to manage the risk of food borne pathogens on apples and pears.

The opportunity

Recent food safety scares around the world have led to many export markets focussing on further reducing the risks of contamination on produce with food-borne pathogens. Increasing understanding and knowledge for managing food safety risk is an opportunity for the industry to create market differentiation. It will provide confidence for customers and consumers to buy New Zealand apples and pears and enhance our reputation for safe food.

The solution

Microbial monitoring and surveillance programmes for fruit and vegetables are not regulatory requirements like other high-risk products such as meat and seafood. As a consequence, the development of a programme will be a new and innovative process applied to an industry with different measures and points of risk. It would place the apple and pear industry as leaders in the development of programmes for fruit and vegetables.

This project aims to develop protocols, guidelines and best management practices to ensure New Zealand apple and pear production and fruit handling systems continue to meet the requirements of export markets. This will include investigating new systems and technologies for monitoring and food handling.

The knowledge from this project will be shared with other horticulture industries, enhancing the broader horticulture sectors' ability to manage food safety.

The benefits

If successful, this project will benefit New Zealand by:

- producing best management practices for apple and pear production systems;
- maintaining access to our export markets;
- providing protocols that other fresh fruit sectors can use.