

Zealong does well in Hong Kong

Waikato's Zealong Tea Estate has been recognised internationally, taking home an award from one of Asia's foremost business events.

The Gordonton-based business won 'Best New Natural/Organic Beverage' at the recent Natural & Organic Product Asia expo in Hong Kong.

Zealong's general manager Gigi Crawford said winning the award was a huge honour.

"The team is proud to be involved in an exhibition that celebrates the most up-to-date products and services."

Zealong is New Zealand's only commercial tea estate. It uses no chemical sprays or fertilisers, and describes its organic certification

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Stuart Bailey

as a "hallmark" of its home grown product.

It has ISO 22000 accreditation, which makes it one of the only fully traceable teas (from leaf to sip) in the world.

Expo organiser Stuart Bailey commended them on their efforts.

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Zealong Tea won an award in Hong Kong. From left: Dyson Xiao, Sen Kong, Stuart Bailey, Gigi Crawford and Nicole Wang.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

expo, I'm sure this will be the first of many accolades."

The company was started in 1996 when Tze Chen and his son Vincent tried to import 1500 tea seedlings from Taiwan, but were

left with only 130 after the quarantine process.

Now the trees number in the thousands and are spread over 40 hectares.

"As a company we are proud of

the innovation we brought to the tea industry and what we have achieved in not only creating great tasting teas, but products that have distinctive health benefits," Crawford said.

Scouts on hunts

Business talent scouts are in Waikato looking for a startup with the potential to be New Zealand's next global agritech superstar.

Sprout, a national agritech business accelerator, is looking for eight entrepreneurs with embryonic businesses for a new development programme.

The chosen eight will receive \$20,000 and be placed in a 20-week part time, remotely delivered programme that will see them flown around the country for mentoring.

Programme manager James Bell-Booth said they wanted people to grow businesses in their home towns.

"We're looking for new businesses from around New Zealand that have big ideas but would benefit from the network, expertise and funding to grow globally," he said.

Those involved in the programme would not have to move to another area.

"This initiative is about finding the next global stars and boosting regional economies at the same time."

The Sprout accelerator programme was designed by BBC, a Palmerston North based business incubator, which has helped establish four globally focussed agritech startups over the last two years.

Their successful startups include BioLumic, CalfSMART, CropX and Polybatics.