



How Radfords helped the Thomas family transform the way they grow, pack and sell their kiwifruit, apples and cherries...

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Radfords are experts at simplifying processes.

Steve Thomas



Thomas Bros prefer to do business on a first name basis. Outside their Riwaka, NZ orchard HQ you will see signs that read ‘Bill’s park’ and ‘Paul’s park’. This is a multi-generational family business, and for the affable Thomas brothers and cousins who run it, strong, long-term working relationships are hugely important.

The Thomas family has lived on and worked their land for over 160 years. Originally sheep farmers, they turned to fruit growing nearly 50 years ago and haven’t looked back.

Thomas Bros and Radfords have been working together for more than a decade, since we set them up with our kiwifruit post-harvest system – at that time the world’s first kiwi-specific software.

From those simple beginnings, things have continued to grow.

## Motivation to move and improve

Back in early 2019, Paul and Steve seemed happy enough with the existing system they used to handle their apples and cherries – it was doing the job, and there was no immediate need to look for a replacement. But they were certainly thinking about it. They realised the apple packhouse software was aging quickly and would soon be past its best-by date. When it looked like the local developer might not be around to support them much longer, Thomas Bros knew it was time to make some changes.

While the potential business risk was the main motivation, there were other factors weighing on their minds. Efficiencies. The legacy apple packhouse system was quite basic and underfeatured by today's standards; pretty much everything had to be entered manually, there was a lot of double-handling, and promised functionality upgrades hadn't materialised.

One provider for all operational requirements.

In Tasman Bay's Riwaka region – where you'll find multi-generational growers of apples, kiwifruit and hops. Relationships are built on trust and "doing what you say you'll do".

As an early adopter of Radfords' FreshPack packhouse system for kiwifruit, Thomas Bros saw Radfords as a natural partner for in-orchard software, as well as future-proofing their apple operations.



PALLETISATION AND TRANSFERRING PACKS IN THE THOMAS BROS KIWIFRUIT PACKHOUSE

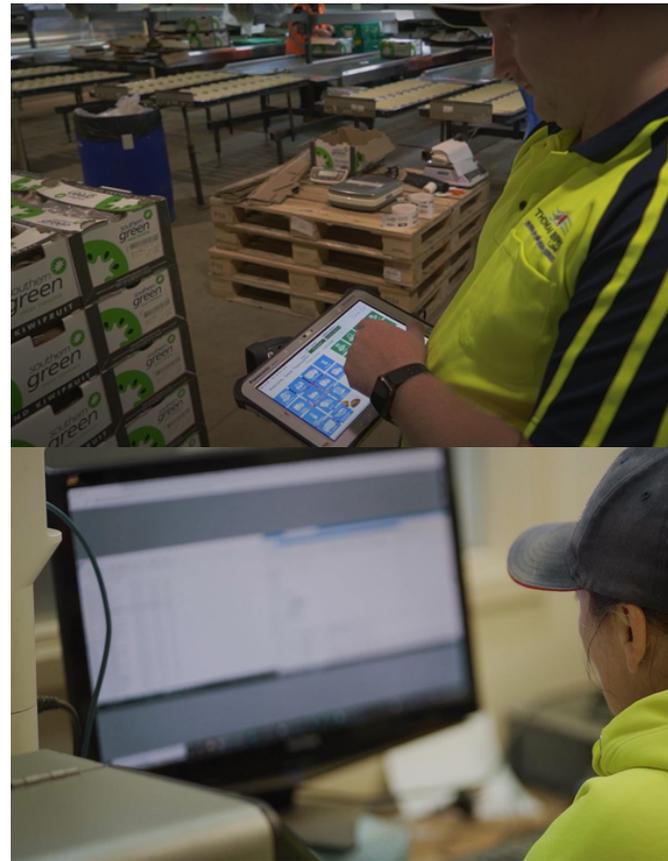


THOMAS BROS ORCHARD OPERATIONS  
STEVE THOMAS AND TEAM

## Working with industry experts

The Thomases had been quietly impressed by the depth of fresh produce knowledge at Radfords – unusual in a software partner – and they appreciated the support we had wrapped around their kiwifruit operation. We hadn't been too pushy with our other products, either. And they liked that.

One morning in September 2020, Paul picked up the phone and called Royce at Radfords and within a short time, the Radfords team were heading to Thomas Bros HQ. They knew the Thomas Bros business well enough, but took another, deeper look at their apple operation and how Radfords systems could best be integrated to streamline and future-proof the business.



The Thomases came to Radfords specifically for FreshPack and ended up introducing six integrated Radfords products, including our Orchard Management system. As Steve explains, it has been a transformational change.

“Radfords are expert at simplifying processes. Streamlining what we need to do. The key is probably the recording of all that data right through the orchard, whether it's chemical applications or labour tracking we've got it all captured in one place for ease of access later on.



Without this we'd still be entering everything manually, duplicating things, the workload would be increased.”

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The technology Radfords gives us frees up our key staff's time by automating the monotonous jobs they don't need to be doing.



## Happy staff are efficient staff

Beyond the productivity efficiencies, the implementation of Radfords systems has made a noticeable difference to staff satisfaction levels.

“The technology Radfords gave us frees up our key staff's time by automating the monotonous jobs they don't need to be doing.”

With good people so hard to find, anything that makes their day-to-day work more enjoyable is a great thing. Just ask Sarah, Simon, Ana or Dale!

### PRODUCTS USED

FreshGrow  
FreshQuality  
FreshSense  
FreshMobile  
FreshPack  
FreshCool

### FRESH PRODUCE MANAGED

NZ Export Apples  
NZ Export Kiwifruit  
Cherries

### LOCATION

Riwaka  
South Island, NZ



**Complete control  
from soil to supermarket**