

## Don Thorp – a little about me

My name is Don Thorp.

I come from a long line of horticulturalists. My Grandfather, Johnny Thorp was born on an orchard in Tasmania in 1880 and grew up growing apples. He emigrated to New Zealand as a young man to take up a position as field officer for the Agricultural Department to assist in the development of the apple industry in New Zealand.



Over his lifetime, Johnny was the Nelson region fruit inspector and managed the apple research station in Mapua, near Nelson. He also planted his own orchard, which my father took over after WWII.

I began my career as a technical field representative for New Zealand's leading horticultural supply company, Fruitfed Supplies – which at the beginning of my employment was the New Zealand Fruitgrowers Federation. I was blessed to have a mentor by the name of Ken Jeffries who gave me the agronomic knowledge I still use today. The leading growers in the district also taught me much about fruit production. I made a lot of life-long friends in the industry. During that time, I had my own small property and grew vegetables and berry-fruit for fresh market, working nights and weekends.

I learned much about the calibration of spray equipment during my time at Fruitfed – in many ways it was my passion to help growers do a better job of spray application – the results being better quality export fruit and no disease issues in their crops.

My next career move was to manage a fruit and produce store operating 7 days a week, 364 days a year. We grew much of our own produce, including apples, kiwifruit, potatoes and some vegetables. It was an exciting time and taught me a lot about business, staff relationships and the world of auction-house trading in the produce sector.

I then moved into sprayer manufacturing in sales management, product management & development, customer support, technical writing and marketing. I moved to Australia with the business in 1999 and have remained here in Adelaide.

In 2018 I joined a small company as one of two representatives in Australia providing data management software and hardware. I had 18 months in this sector, during which time I learned a lot about what growers need, how confusing for them it can be to choose the right technology, but also how it can make a real difference in key decision making. The time spent there was very valuable and gave me a great insight into the market needs for technology. This sector will develop rapidly in the next 3-5 years & beyond.

In 2020, I decided to draw on all my knowledge, training and contacts and start Horticultural Spraying Specialists. I have a lot to offer the horticultural industry in Australia, and I genuinely believe my skills can add value to this industry. My values are simple: Integrity, determination, collaboration & honesty. I love helping growers make better decisions to grow their businesses and knowledge accordingly.