

The New Zealand Herald

Andre Prassinos is surprised Kiwi of year finalist

By Adriana Weber

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A Rotorua man has the chance to win big at the Kiwibank 2014 New Zealander of the Year Awards.

Andre Prassinos has been named one of three finalists for the awards' Sanitarium Innovator of the Year title, which aims to recognise New Zealanders' innovative achievements.

Mr Prassinos was nominated for his role in co-founding BioBrew, a Rotorua company that specialises in making microbial products for the agricultural sector.

The product, a liquid supplement, can be given to animals via their water supply, feed or direct drenching and is said to greatly improve their health.

Mr Prassinos said he was thrilled to be a finalist for such a prestigious award. "I'm so thrilled, but I'm actually surprised considering all the other nominees and all the incredible things they have done."

"It's nice to know that people think I'm worthy of this recognition."

Mr Prassinos said he initially did not know he was a finalist because his wife entered him.

BioBrew was founded by Mr Prassinos and his business partner Don Pearson in 2009 and the company has since established four breweries across the country.

Last year the company received the 2013 Business Award for Restorative Innovation at the Sustainable Business Awards and was a Rotorua Business Awards finalist.

Mr Prassinos said his company has a focus on sustainable practices, with containers being recycled and reused and other sustainable processes being enforced. "We just want to bring a high-quality product to farmers to help them in the most sustainable and environmentally friendly way possible."

Mr Prassinos, who has a sales background, said he never imagined going down such a career path. "If you had asked me in 2008 if I was going to be a finalist for an award for working in a probiotics company, I wouldn't have known what to say. I wouldn't have believed you!"

He said the company was working on creating a probiotic product for human health.

Meanwhile, the Otanewainuku Kiwi Trust is a finalist for the Mitre 10 Community of the Year award. The finalists for the supreme New Zealander of the Year award are Dr Lance O'Sullivan of Northland, founder of



Rotorua's Andre Prassinos has been selected as a category finalist in the Kiwibank 2014 New Zealander of the Year Awards for his role in co-founding BioBrew. Photo/Supplied

CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Trust, Catriona Williams of Masterton and Wellington Maori educator Dame Dr Iritana Tawhiwhirangi.

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