

# SEASON UPDATE

## New Leases Performing Well

With two of our new lease orchards having been harvested to date we are pleased that they performing extremely well; this is a credit to our horticulture department and all involved.

Fernybank Orchard on Rea Road didn't have a particularly good history prior to us taking over the lease in June last year. Approximately half of its 3.15ha was already in pergola and the remainder of the orchard was converted from T-bar by Gordy Davy and his team as soon as we took over the lease.

In the last four years of Fernybank's previous lease to another company it had produced between 4,000 and 7,400 trays per hectare at count sizes 35.3, 34.6, 37.4 and 35.5. This year we harvested a staggering 9,000 trays per hectare at an average count size of 34.6. To achieve this sort of production from the first crop post-conversion is an excellent result. Needless to say the orchard owners are delighted!

Another new lease in Beach Road which was producing on average 8,000 trays per hectare has produced a yield of 10,700 trays per hectare, a size 32.40 average and a great TZG.

*"To achieve this sort of production from the first crop post-conversion is an excellent result. Needless to say the orchard owners are delighted!"*

Also, this orchard had never been picked for KiwiStart and Aongatete managed to bring this great crop into some of the earliest weeks this year which resulted in the best result ever for the owner.

This again is a great credit to the Aongatete team, especially in a year with some unique challenges.

It has been some time since our lease contract was updated so we are currently in the process of a critical review to improve the documentation and make it easier to understand. The updated lease contract will also address the risk of Psa and insurance responsibilities.

Aongatete will be taking on more leases this year so if you are thinking about or know anyone considering lease, management or labour supply options please contact one of our Grower Services Representatives:

Rod Calver 0275 909 710  
 Richard Allan 0275 307 909  
 Andrew Dawson 0275 940 247

## New Varieties

### New Variety Fruit Tasting Event

ZESPRI have scheduled a New Variety Fruit Tasting to provide an opportunity to taste the new variety selections and provide an update of their performance to date this season. ZESPRI will also discuss the Fixed Price and Closed Tender Process for purchasing licence and an update on Psa and the global R&D programme. The tasting schedule is listed on page 4.

Now is the time of year to be thinking about orchard conversion if you have been considering new varieties for your orchard. We have created a financial model which is a great tool for investigating whether new varieties are a viable option for your orchard. Our Grower Services team have extensive conversion experience and are a valuable resource to draw on.

If you would like one of our Grower Services Representatives to go over our financial model with you please phone Andrew Dawson.

## Grower Psa Update Meeting

Information regarding the alarming spread of Psa in both Italy and France during the Northern Hemisphere spring raises real concerns. Not only has the incidence greatly increased in Europe, it is now seriously affecting Hayward which up until now has not shown secondary symptoms in New Zealand. Coupled with this many growers are seeking more information as to what is industry best practice immediately post harvest and during and after winter pruning.

Growers and others involved in the Industry need to be aware that it is highly probable that the spread of Psa could worsen in the coming season if what is happening in Europe is anything to go by.

ZESPRI and Kiwifruit Vine Health Inc. (KVH) are holding a meeting to update growers on Psa, this will include a presentation from Shane Max, Orchard Productivity Manager Global Supply after his recent trip to Europe and Sonia Whiteman, Technical Manager, KVH.

**Wednesday 25th May 5– 7pm.** The meeting will be held in Katikati, the venue is to be confirmed.

Due to demand ZESPRI have the Aongatete and the Satara meetings.



## Harvest Reminders

It is very frustrating for the team to still have eight Gold blocks to harvest at the time of writing this. The recent humidity has prevented us from picking Gold until the afternoons. It is our priority to get this Gold harvested.

The new soft trailers are working well for Gold and in other small orchards. Apart from the pickers having to empty their bags to ground level most pickers seem happy to use them and they really appreciate not having smelly tractors stopping and starting.

Our picking gangs are working very well. Aongatete Orchard Manager Steve Roberts who has been working in kiwifruit for 26 years says they are the best pickers he has ever worked with.

On May 10th we sent four gangs to Auckland, they left at 5am and were home at 7pm. They managed to harvest all of the 7ha orchard. Fotheringhams do a fantastic job of trucking on the long-haul jobs.

**Water Stains:** Due to the frustratingly rainy weather we are contending with this season we have had some issues with water staining fruit. Water stains are an avoidable defect that can seriously compromise the yield potential of a crop.

Water stains occur when it rains between spraying for water stain and harvest. They come from the tannin leaking from dead leaf matter in the canopy when it is wet.

It is imperative you re-spray if it rains or showers within the 24 hours subsequent to your orchard being sprayed prior to harvest. Always check your fruit is clean prior to harvesting.

**Orchard Hygiene:** The practice and continuation of orchard hygiene protocols are essential for managing your orchard's Psa risk level. Please ensure all orchard staff, visitors and anyone entering your orchard adheres to our industry hygiene procedures.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of a well kept loading area with hard standing and a water supply. The wet conditions have only increased the need to good metalised load out facilities.

If you would like a copy of Aongatete's hygiene protocols or if you have any concerns please contact Bernie Cookson on 0275 363 754.

## NIR (Near Infra Red)

We have been working hard on the NIR system and have programmed it to remove softs and soft spots during the packing process with very high accuracy. With some soft lines we have been sending softs to one grading table only so that our best 'soft' graders are dealing with a small percentage of the fruit to reduce the amount the fruit is handled. This system was used last year but with more programming the accuracy is incessantly improving. We are also able to distinguish very low dry matter.

We are working with ZESPRI to allow us to grade Gold that is below the minimum taste standard (TZG). Using the NIR we are able to grade out fruit with very low TZG and thus recover a line that is then assigned a new TZG by AgFirst.

Our new single-laner (with NIR) will be used for monitoring our library trays non-destructively and for repacking. This will feature in our next newsletter and if any of you would like to see it in action please don't hesitate to ask.

## Sure-Cane Surfactant

ZESPRI has advised that the use of air-inclusion nozzles and drift-reducing surfactants when spraying Hydrogen Cyanamide will be compulsory from June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Aongatete have secured a competitive rate for Sure-Cane which has a label claim for kiwifruit as a drift-reducing surfactant for Hydrogen Cyanamide, and is approved by ZESPRI. Our supply price for Sure-Cane is \$53.00 per litre plus GST. Because of our volume purchase this represents a significant saving over the retail cost.

Sure-Cane can be ordered in one or five litre containers (the per litre price remains the same for both). The recommended Sure-Cane application rate is 50ml of Sure-Cane to 100L of Water.

If you would like to order Sure-Cane surfactant please phone Angela Holmes on 07 552 0916 x706 or email [angelah@coolstore.co.nz](mailto:angelah@coolstore.co.nz). The order deadline is 27<sup>th</sup> May.

## Staff Profile: Julie Lim

Julie Lim first came to New Zealand in 2006 when she worked a season at Seeka but for the last five years she has returned to Aongatete.

Julie lives in a house in the city of Kota Kinabalu which is the capital of Sabah in East Malaysia. The population of Kota Kinabalu is 600,000—*much bigger than Katikati!*

Julie and her husband have three children. One of her sons is a permanent resident in the USA and her other son and daughter live in the same city of Kota Kinabalu. Their son in Sabah has taken over his father's role as the Managing Director of a local engineering company as Julie's husband is now retired.

Julie loves returning to New Zealand. She has travelled to Ruapehu, Napier, Masterton, Hastings and Auckland and one day would love to see the South Island. Our cold winters are something she doesn't like.

Julie says the friendly atmosphere at Aongatete and the money she earns are a good incentive to return each year. Last year Julie treated herself to a two week holiday in Melbourne, Australia with the money she earned.

Whilst working at Aongatete Julie and fellow Malaysian and long-serving Aongatete employee Agnes Lee (who has been working in our packhouse for eight years) board with Robyn and Keith Judd on Thompson's Track.

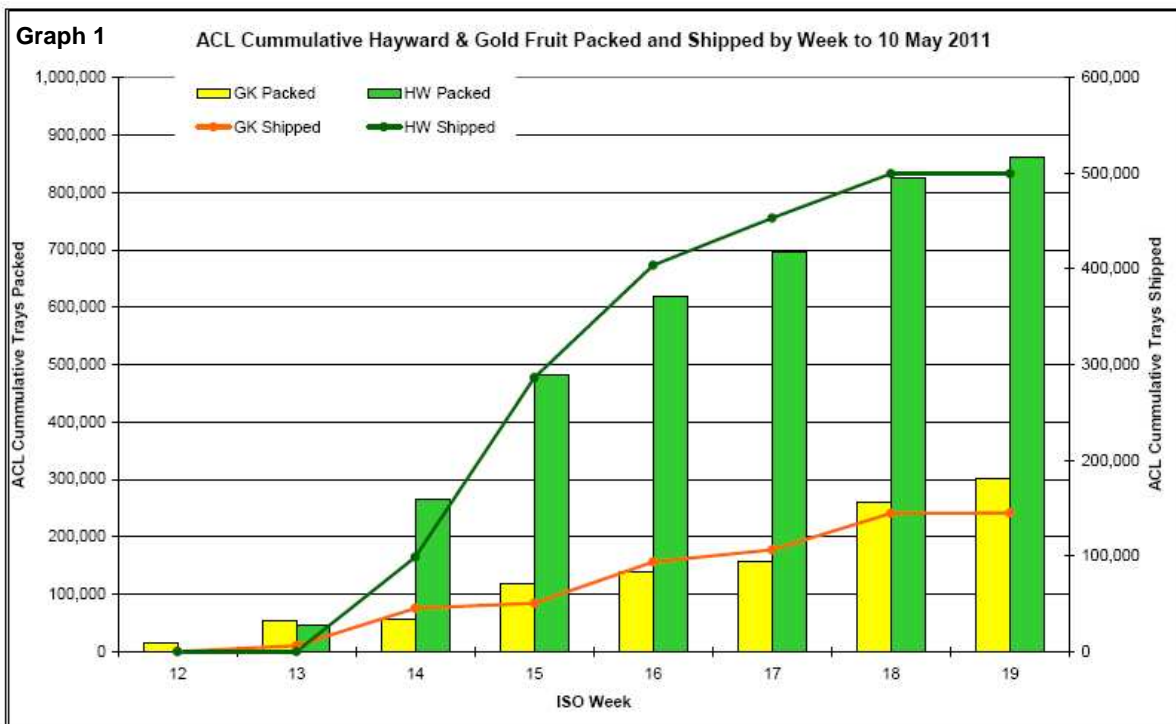


## Season Statistics

Graph 1 shows the amount of fruit Aongatete has packed up to Wednesday 10th May.

To date we have achieved excellent ECPI results, particularly with our Hayward fruit.

We have shipped 33.3% of our Gold crop estimate and 25.13% of our Hayward crop estimate which equates to 26.46% of our total crop estimate.



## Dry Matter

Aongatete's dry matter performance up to Wednesday May 10th is shown in graphs 2 and 3. As you can see we are ahead of the industry average for Y, T and R band fruit and below the industry average for M band fruit which is an excellent result.

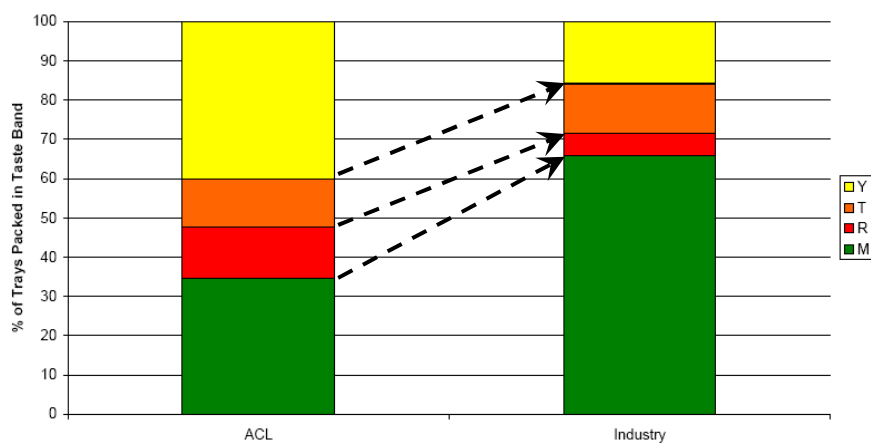
## Maturity Update

The end of the maturity testing season is approaching with Green brixes moving towards optimum levels for storage. Monitoring for main pack and CA is continuing to so we can maximise each crop's potential for storage and the grower. Green solids are slowly climbing as brixes rise.

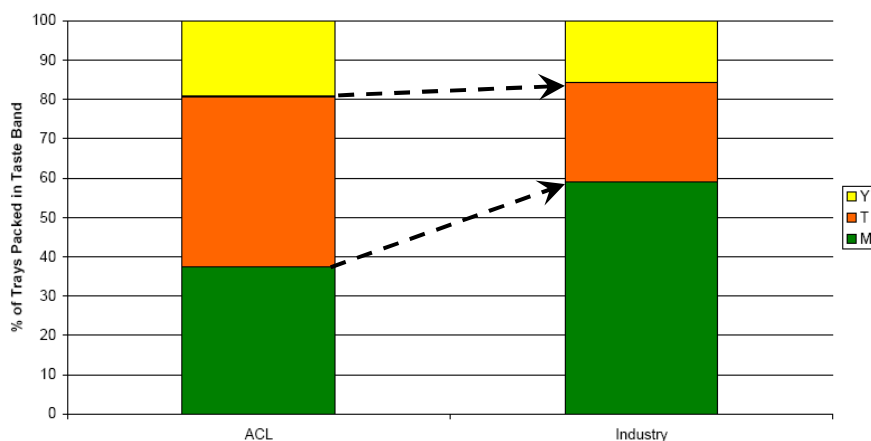
Most Gold crops have met Protocol B with solids plateauing at this stage of maturity. The warm wet weather is continuing to hinder the season with crops cleared but unable to be picked.

If you have any questions please contact the Maturity Team on ext 723 or your Grower Services Representative.

**Graph 2** Industry and ACL Gold Dry Matter Distribution by Percentage of Trays Packed as at 10 May 2011



**Graph 3** Industry and ACL Hayward Dry Matter Distribution by Percentage of Trays Packed as at 10 May 2011



**Grower Services Team**

**ZESPRI New Variety Tasting Schedule**

(Continued from front page)

<b>Hawke's Bay:</b> Wednesday 25 May Ron Flowers Packhouse, Twyford Road, Hastings	10am - 12pm
<b>Opotiki:</b> Thursday 26 May Citizens Club, Nelson Street & King Street	10am - 12pm
<b>Edgecumbe:</b> Thursday 26 May Awakeri Events Centre, Edgecumbe	2pm - 4pm
<b>Auckland:</b> Tuesday 31 May Counties Inn, 17 Paerata Road, Pukekohe	10am - 12pm
<b>Waikato:</b> Tuesday 31 May Prince Albert, Victoria Street, Cambridge	2pm - 4pm
<b>Katikati:</b> Thursday 2 June Resource Centre, Beach Road, Katikati	9.30am – 11.30am



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