

**KIWIFRUIT NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2010**

**COSMETIC THINNING – MAXIMISE
YOUR PAYOUT RESULTS**

EDITORIAL

Harvest is now about seven weeks away for Aongatete. We have been planning and getting ready for the same amount of time already.

It is interesting to look at the two sides of harvest involving the Packhouse and the Grower, with the Grower having a harvest involvement for a period of days and the Packhouse being involved for three months, and up to six months if CA storage is involved. A strong focus must be kept on the Growers window for harvest, as this is a stressful time when twelve month's work comes to fruition.

At the same time, in the packhouse there is a focus on continuity of Quality, for both shifts each day, for the seven days a week we work, as well as the 12 weeks of Kiwistart / Mainpack, then the 12 weeks of Controlled Atmosphere storage.

Harvest can be stressful or relatively stress free. Yes, everyone's performance can affect this, but it is also a mental attitude that takes into account the fact that actual harvest for our orchardists is critical and takes place over days and the performance in the packhouse is critical but takes place over three to six months.

We are all in this together - very soon another strand will be added to our life's tapestry. We all intend to make this a positive strand, and taking a few moments to understand the pressures we encounter can help achieve this for all.

Richard Allen
Client Services



With hot weather and plenty of rain recently, fruit is sizing up well across the region. Defects are starting to stand out clearly from Class 1 destined fruit and now is a great time to get under way with cosmetic thinning.



Cosmetic thinning is an important part of your orchard management strategy. Your overall aim should always be to grow as much Class 1 fruit as possible. Some orchards naturally tend to throw more misshapen fruit and will need a more intensive thin at this time of year while others will have very little defect fruit in the canopy.

Orchards that have had a flower bud thinning and crop loading/defect thinning before Christmas currently stand out markedly against orchards that didn't. Cosmetic thinning in these orchards is a very quick job whereas it is a labourious task in those that have had little thinning to date.

We continually come across the perception in the industry that it is more economical to send rejects to the packhouse for sorting rather than thinning in the field. This is not true and likely to expose you to increased risks and cost.

It pays to remember that the bulk of your grading is still done by human eyes rather than machines. Regardless of skill level, when a crop comes through, heavily laden with a range of defects, it is much harder to stay in the narrow area between over-grading and under-grading. It is easy to keep clean crops in this area and those growers therefore maximise their packouts (i.e. trays/bin).

Further to this are some more reasons why having a high percentage of defects in your crop ultimately costs you money.

- Paying to pick reject fruit
- Paying to freight reject fruit
- Low trays/bin increases your per tray packing cost
- Incurs packing penalties
- Slows the grader down – this costs everybody in critical periods such as Kiwistart if it reduces the number of trays that can be processed
- Increases your risk of being out of grade after packing
- Increases your risk of needing repacking where you will likely lose even more fruit overall
- Double handling of fruit exacerbates softening of fruit
- Some defects are easier to see in the canopy rather than rolling over the grading table at speed

Naturally it is unrealistic to have a 100% clean crop and it is always economical for a low percent of rejects to go to the packhouse. Rejects rates should easily be brought down to a manageable level with one reasonably quick thin – just ensure that you and your team have your eye in to what is and isn't an acceptable shape/sized fruit. We are always more than happy to help out in this area and strongly suggest that you arrange an appointment if you're unsure of what does and does not constitute a reject at packing.

Getting rid of easily seen flats/fans/squares/Haywards means you can use up your quota of rejects with things that are more difficult to control such as water stain and sooty mould (which were both significant problems last year). For example if you have a bad year for sooty mould you might have a reject rate of 7% but if you have a shape issue on top that could easily push your reject rate up to 14% pushing your crop into penalty territory (over 10%). If those shape issues had been removed with thinning, even with a sooty mould issue, the crop would still have earned a rebate for having less than 10% rejects at packing.

Just a reminder that reject rates at ACL do not include Class II, Class III etc, and are literally just the fruit that go as process or stock feed.

Undersize fruit is also a good thing to address before harvest – although the safest strategy for this is to leave it as close to harvest as possible so you've got a good handle on how the fruit will size up. Zespri won't be releasing the 2010 weight bands for a couple of weeks yet. Last year anything under 75g at packing would not have been included in standard supply (GREEN). Please call me at anytime if you'd like up to date information on what weight you should be thinning to.

Starting in week 8 we will be profiling all crops coming through the packhouse for both size and fruit defects. We will benchmark all the crops in a similar fashion to what you would have seen in your comparative reports. This will make it easy to see whether you may or may not have an issue that needs to be addressed prior to packing.

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Again, please do not hesitate to contact us if you need help with determining reject fruit from export fruit. This is harder than it sounds, and our graders are retrained up to three times daily at packing to ensure that they keep their eye on it so it would not be strange if you were finding it difficult.

Good luck with the remainder of the growing season – you're on the home stretch now!

Jacqueline McCormack
Horticultural Technical Leader



MATURITY TESTING

In a few weeks, we will again be starting Maturity Testing for KiwiStart crops. Early season frosts and an extended flowering period may result in a number of problems with Gold crops in 2010. Extended flowering could have created a range of fruit maturities on-vine, which has the potential to impact clearances, storage and conditioning, and shipping of Gold crops. Across the industry, Gold fruit sizes and total volume is down on last year – it looks as if 2010 has the potential to be a difficult year for Gold.

Industry reports indicate that Green crops are similar to last year in terms of size and volume; however some reports indicate that cold weather during flowering has had an impact on fruit shape. For 2010, Zespri has changed the KiwiStart criteria for Green crops. This year, there will be two KiwiStart clearance criteria – a K-type and an M-type (these names may however change).

K-type clearances will be obtained when the Blossom-End Brix Fractile is in the range of 4.8 – 5.2°, and M-type obtained at a Blossom-End Brix Fractile greater than 5.2° through the KiwiStart Period. All other criteria (minimum TZG, percentage black seeds) will remain the same. There will be no change to Main Pack clearances. KiwiStart clearances will also have different ship-by-dates, with K-type needing to be shipped by the end of Week 19 and M-type shipped by the end of Week 24. These changes to KiwiStart clearance criteria will allow for more timely shipping of earlier harvested crops, and for more accurate and effective on-board conditioning of crops.

PACKHOUSE NEWS

During Maturity Testing this year we will be again carrying out intensive testing of controlled atmosphere (CA) crops to ensure that we are placing the best quality fruit into our short and medium-term stores.

As in previous years, we will be in contact with you prior to testing your orchard. As always, if you have any questions about the Maturity Testing process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Christopher Clement.
Post Harvest Technical Support



MARCH MADNESS

We have much pleasure in promoting
Olivado Avocado Oils



A quality NZ made product, ideal for gifts, and priced to meet your budget!

For the remainder of February and until the **end of March 2010** we are offering the following prices. Place your order now to avoid missing out, as these **prices may not be extended.**

250 ml Plain, Infused & Omega Avocado Oil only	\$7.95
Spray Cans – ideal for BBQ	\$8.50
250 ml Zest Avocado Oil	\$8.95
750 ML Plain Avocado Oil	\$19.00

Prices are GST Inclusive
Product available at Reception

Well it's that time of the year again, when our attention turns to Picking and Packing, So just a few points from the Packhouse. As we will be auto scanning all bin cards at the bin dump this year, the placement of the card is important, close to 50mm in from the left hand side of the bin and 50mm down from the top. Also only staple these cards on not glued on please.

When the harvest begins the filling of the bins is important. Over filling leads to damaged fruit, but is less of a problem than the under filling of bins which is a direct loss of profit to you, the grower, due to extra picking and cartage costs.

There are a few, but significant, changes going on in the Packhouse at this moment. Firstly we are electronically weighing all rejects in real time, this will allow us have a better idea of the reject rate at any stage of packing. Coupled with this is the tabulation and reporting of all fruit packed, in kilograms and in tray equivalents, again in real time.

We have also installed a third grading table on the two lane sizer. This will enable us to make better use of the soft bulk fillers.

The out-feed and the main grading tables have been rebuilt to allow more room for graded fruit to travel to the main sizer, without the risk of excessive collision.

We are very pleased with staff this year. We have a full compliment, especially in key roles, particularly Q.C's and EDI, and have a few vacancies remaining in the packing area only.

We are more than keen to see growers come into the Packhouse to watch their fruit being packed, and we look forward to partnering with you this Season.

Clive Exelby
Packhouse Manager



NEW VARIETY ORCHARD MAPS

As part of setting up your orchard for a New Variety you are required to have a GPS map no older than three years old, If your map needs updating then we encourage you to do this ahead of time.

If your map is GPS but older than three years and you believe it to be accurate please contact your Client Services Team or Zespri direct to confirm that it will be acceptable.

NEW VARIETY LICENSING

Growers should be aware that Zespri has released discussion papers on licensing and pooling for new varieties.

This is a discussion paper only and it is not to be perceived as the final decision – it is a proposal for discussion purposes only.

We encourage all Growers to participate in these discussions. Decisions will have to be made soon and these decisions will affect the ability for Growers to participate, as well as setting the base structure for the marketing and pooling of the variety.

Note that KGI will be making recommendations on the 11th March, so be pro active.

The discussion papers can be viewed on the *Canopy website*.

Next week's KGI update will also have a link to the minutes of the last KGI forum meeting held on the 11th February.

You can also call your KGI representative, or if you are having problems accessing the Canopy website call the Zespri call centre on 0800 155 355

CONTROL DMP

Sooty mould caused by Cicada or Passion Vine Hopper secretions can be appearing on your fruit now.

Aongatete's Horticultural Department has secured stock of Control DMP for cleaning off the Honey Dew before it turns black with Sooty Mould.



If you are concerned or want to discuss this please call our Horticultural Manager, Bernie Cookson on 0275 363 754.

KIWI GREEN MONITORING

Full rounds of Kiwi Green monitoring have now finished.

Growers who would like another round of monitoring, or who discover pests, should contact Caron on (07) 552 0916.

WEEDKILLER STRIKES AGAIN

**ACL Glyphosate 20 litres @ \$119.00
Plus GST**

Delivery can be arranged from our site – Just ask at Reception.
Phone Caron on 552 0916, extension 750

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