

Harvest Report

Persistent rain over the last fortnight has disrupted picking making the progress of harvest particularly difficult. With this sort of weather it is even more imperative to have a metalled loadout area as without this, conditions quickly become unworkable.

Please ensure that you have a hose available on your orchard, preferably on hard standing so that gear can be washed down after the harvest is complete before the equipment is transported to other orchards. Aongatete does have a portable hose unit available, however an on-orchard hose is more practical.

In many cases the management programme instigated last season has reduced sooty mould significantly, however some problems still remain. This season up to 90% of the rejects in some lines have been due to sooty mould. These problems occur where the spray can't penetrate the source of the passion vine hopper. In order to manage this, any plants likely to contribute to sooty mould on your orchard need to be removed or more thoroughly sprayed.

Psa Protocols:

We are taking our Psa Protocols very seriously. Please talk to Bernie Cookson, Horticultural Manager or your Grower Services Representative should you have any concerns.



Pictured: Whare Taitapanui from Opotiki who has worked for Aongatete for 21 years - A million dollar attitude and a million dollar smile! Photo courtesy of Peter MacKay and Sue Beatty.

Hydrogen Cyanamide Application

ZESPRI advises the use of air inclusion nozzles and drift-reducing surfactants when spraying Hydrogen Cyanamide will be compulsory from June 30th 2011.

Aongatete are arranging a supply of Sure Cane surfactant at a competitive rate and we will be contacting growers who have placed an order for HC50 to ascertain their requirements.

Maturity Monitoring

After a slow start we are now well into the swing of things. At the time of writing this newsletter KiwiStart is into its final week with the focus shifting to main pack and as at May 2nd, we have eight Hayward main pack clearances. Dry matter is as always a big focus; the warm nights and rainy days have delayed maturity compared to last year where drought-induced stress prematurely shut down vine growth, promoting dry matter accumulation in the fruit. The upside of this is that an improvement in fruit size has resulted with the longer growing season.

This season the industry has already packed over 70% M band fruit; therefore our focus is on managing dry matter in addition to brix readings. We may well end up with slightly higher brix readings in order to maximise the dry matter potential and therefore the storage options available to us with the crop.

Gold:

Gold maturity as with Hayward has been slow this season, however with the recent longer and cooler nights we have noticed maturity levels beginning to lift.

Low dry matter Gold fruit is a concern this season and it may be a challenge for some growers to deliver crops that meet the Minimum Taste Standard (MTS) which is by definition less than 15.0 percent dry matter (<0.30 TZG). For orchards with this concern the following actions will be taken:

- Orchards will be reviewed by block to identify any areas that will meet the MTS.
- NIR technology will separate any fruit over the required MTS to be submitted for export in ZESPRI Class 1.
- Fruit below the MTS will be sent to local market.

Hayward:

Currently our Maturity Team is profiling all orchards for main pack by tracking each block's brix, pressure and dry matter over three monitoring rounds. Low and uneven dry matter leads to poorer storage life in controlled atmosphere or conventional coolstores. It is important that all crops are monitored to provide the information to enable the reduction of fruit loss and to maximise the taste benefit to growers.

Firmness on the first vessels measured soon after departure is almost 2kgf lower than 2010, this is indicative of how different this growing season is.

If you have any questions, please contact our Maturity Team on 07 552 0916 ext 723 or contact your Grower Services Representative.



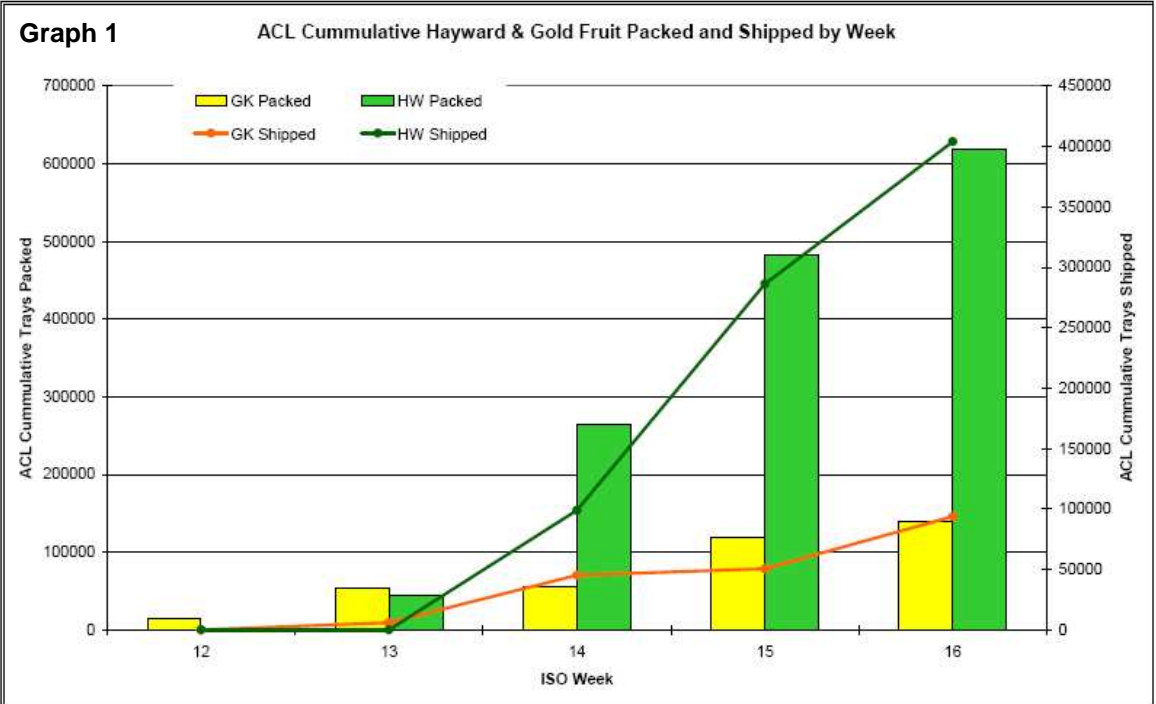
Season Statistics

Graph 1 (right) details the amount of fruit Aongatete has packed [755,000] as at the end of Week 16 (April 24th).

At the end of Week 17 (May 1st) we had packed a total of 855,000 trays (Green and Gold combined).

A comparative figure for trays packed by Week 17 2010 was 1.3 million trays packed.

This significant reduction in packed trays reflects the slow start that we have had with gaining maturity clearances. Later maturity timing has been an industry-wide phenomena this season.



Dry Matter

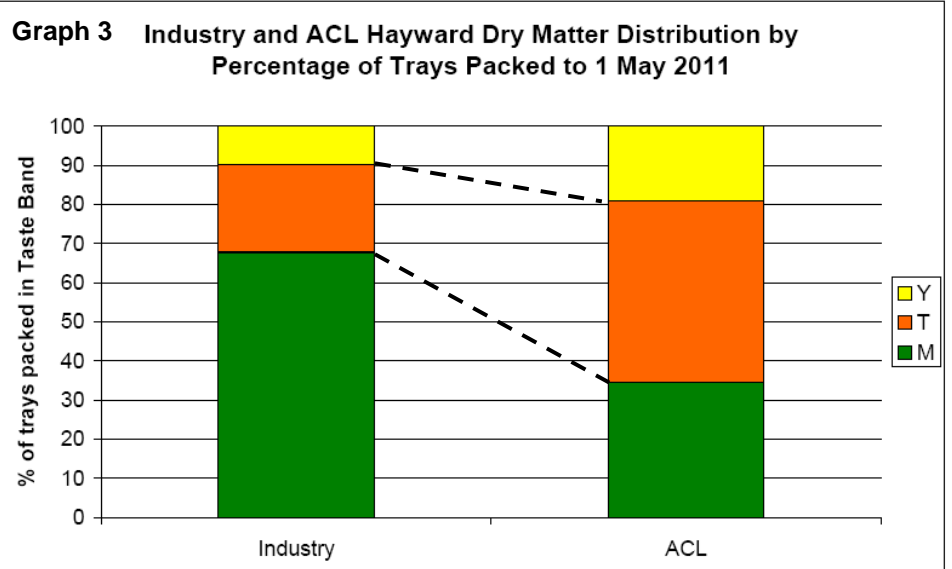
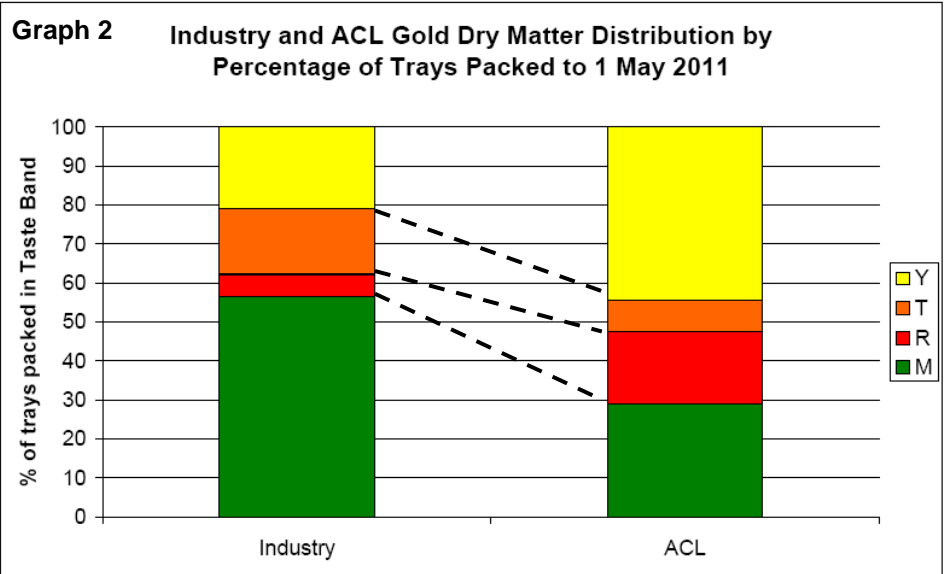
Aongatete's dry matter performance compared to industry figures as at May 1 (Week 17) is shown in Graphs 2 and 3.

We have managed to achieve excellent dry matter performance to date which can be largely credited to our dedicated Maturity Monitoring Team who have been working exceptionally hard to ensure growers are gaining optimum dry matter returns.

Gold: In cross industry comparison we have packed more than double the proportion of Y band, and approximately half the proportion of M band for Gold fruit (Graph 2).

Gold taste band is at its maximum TZG around Protocol A and B, subsequently solids tend to decline. The Maturity Monitoring Team endeavours to select and measure fruit when it's at optimum TZG so growers can receive the highest possible taste level premiums.

Hayward: Aongatete packing represents approximately double the proportion of Y and T band fruit and half the proportion of M band fruit packed by the wider industry (Graph 3)



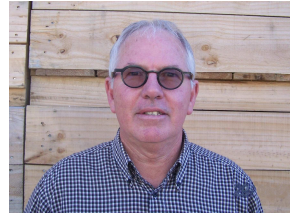
HR Changes

Grower Services Manager

Aongatete welcomes **Alan Thorn** as Grower Services Manager. Alan looks forward to meeting with Aongatete growers and working to improve orchard performance and returns through applying his dual skill sets in the scientific and business environments with the Growers Services team.

Alan has an extensive scientific background; he graduated with a Bachelor of Science (Earth Sciences) then spent 21 years as a research scientist with the Forest Research Institute. Alan has worked with the USA forestry industry and gained a Master of Science (Forest Resources) at the University of Georgia.

Alan has a strong business background and has previously worked as a Client Service Manager for Forest Research. He completed a Masters of Business Administration through Massey University Executive Programme and looks forward to utilising these skills in the kiwifruit industry. Most recently Alan held the role of Chief Executive for the Avocado Industry Council.



Technical Support Manager

We are pleased to announce **Margaret Miller** who is currently a member of our technical support team, will be moving into the Technical Support Manager position. Margaret will continue her work with maturity clearances for the remainder of this season as well as take on her new role which will include managing this season's fertiliser recommendations.

We are pleased to be able to promote from within Aongatete and we have every confidence Margaret will excel in this role. Margaret has a Bachelor of Science (Ecology and Horticulture) and a Certificate in Sustainable Nutrient Management and has been working with Aongatete since 2009.



Farewell Jacqueline McCormack

It is with regret that we have said farewell to Jacki McCormack our Technical Support Manager. Jacki joined us in 2007 as a graduate with experience in the apple industry but not the kiwifruit industry so she had a steep learning curve. While working at Aongatete Jacki grew a lot within her role and developed a lot of close relationships with growers. Jacki has left to expand her experience within the kiwifruit industry and will be working in Edgecumbe. We wish her the very best.



Spray Technician and Operator

Welcome to **Steve Stewart** who joins our spray team. Steve has a wealth of experience as he has been operating Atom sprayers since 2004 and has been spraying on average approximately 100 canopy hectares per year. Steve will be working closely with Margaret Miller on spray planning for our leased and managed orchards and will be responsible for the new Cobra sprayer.



New Spray Machinery

We recently purchased a COBRA TIFONE 2000 self-propelled orchard sprayer. This unit is built to very high specifications and is equipped with the latest Croplands spray technology.

This will be a welcomed addition to our spray department and will be operated by Steve Stewart, our new Spray Technician and Operator.

The COBRA offers greater comfort and maximum safety with complete hygienic protection and total visibility when spraying. It is a compact narrow unit which can enter less accessible or overhanging rows. Its round-shaped profile prevents it from damaging branches, leaves and fruit. The unit has good ground clearance while maintaining a low overall height.

