

## KIWIFRUIT NEWSLETTER END MAY 2010

The Aongatete harvest this year has been one of the smoothest I have experienced since I started my Kiwifruit career in 1982.

The great teamwork and communication through all departments has given a smooth flow in a year when weather has given us no break in harvesting until the rains of last week.

This also means that Aongatete is right on target for this harvest and we have even picked a crop in the weekend to help a grower from another packhouse.

I believe we may see more of this as the rain delays harvest of brix ready crops. Please do not hesitate to call us if you know of any growers in difficulty with their current crop.

With most of our crops in store now our growers are looking ahead again. Soil testing is under way and winter pruning is being discussed. This has been a very hard season, and this is a good time to contemplate how you can protect your orchard from cold and pollination problems, as well as looking after your vines a bit more intensely if they suffered stress due to the long dry spell.

Along with the usual winter programme there will be some New Variety Development, included with this newsletter is a survey to our Growers asking for an indication on potential plantings of the New Varieties. While we know many Growers are still sitting on the fence due to minimal information to date, it will be of assistance to Aongatete to be able to judge the requirements of our Growers, as well as for the supply and ordering information for the packhouse.



Richard Allen  
Client Services

## TRUSTEE REPORT

### **The Importance of the In House Laboratory to Aongatete Growers.**

#### **Early start harvest.**

Aongatete's lab tests all their clients' maturity areas beginning early March to establish bench mark maturity levels. This enables targeting, of all maturity areas, which may have early harvest potential, regardless of their previous early start status. All growers, and maturity areas, therefore have a fair chance at early start fruit incentives. From this early benchmark lab staff can plan a testing program for the client base which maximises, for both growers and the Pack house, the number of trays packed, for each week, of the early start program.

#### **Ag-First test comparison**

The lab is able to **monitor** whether the results produced, are in line with what would be expected, given their previous testing of the same maturity areas.

All fruit put up by Aongatete for a maturity clearance has recently been tested by their in house Lab.

#### **Identification of stressed orchard blocks.**

Aongatete's regular lab testing of all maturity areas gives the opportunity to identify stressed blocks or areas of blocks so they may be harvested before they are over mature.

The identification of these lines of fruit means they can be harvested and moved through the marketing system, to maximise the value of that fruit to the grower in question, but also minimise any potential risk to both the grower and the pool later in the season.

This season, because of the very dry growing conditions, a number of Aongatete clients, have had areas of their orchard, which have shown they needed to be harvested early, but as main pack, to protect the value in that fruit. In some cases, there may only be a small part of a maturity area, affected by stress, but early identification, testing and action if needed, protects grower value and the whole pools interests.

If you have even the slightest concerns, about an area of your orchard, contact the Lab and discuss the issue with them. Their collection procedures are such; they can look back at your recent testing and perhaps pick up differences within a sample.

#### **Crops with C.A potential.**

The bench mark testing of all maturity areas, over a longish period, enables the lab staff to identify crops, which may be suitable for C.A. storage. A list of the crops showing C.A. potential can be created, and C.A rooms planned by grouping those crops with similar potential.

Prior to harvest, all crops for a room will be tested by the Lab to confirm their similar potential. The group are then submitted to Ag-First and provided all are cleared, and have brix in the correct C.A. range, their harvest is planned and carried out, within a 2 day period as required for efficient C.A. Room filling.

### **Grower cost saving.**

The in house testing of Aongatete's clients fruit is a **non profit** service. Because of the lab, Aongatete clients' maturity areas are all pre-tested before being submitted for an Ag-First test. Maturity areas are not submitted if they don't have a good chance of achieving a maturity clearance. This ensures growers only pay for testing by Ag-First, when there is a good chance of success, thereby saving growers testing costs.

I hope this editorial helps all growers understanding of the Lab's role. Those regular visits you get from the lab staff, during the harvest season, are very important for achieving the best potential return from your crop.

Merv Stockley  
Trustee.

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## **LARGE GOLD FRUIT**



Gold fruit from Phillip Road Orchard (in South Auckland) compared with a size 36 shows impressive sizing for a year like this.

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## **FREE SOIL TEST COLLECTION, AND RECOMMENDATION**



With the dust barely settled from harvest, it's not too soon to be thinking about vine nutrition on your orchard. Even now, at the end of the growing cycle, those senescing, yellowing leaves in the canopy are giving up their last shreds of nutrients before they drop off to be pumped back down into the root system which will feed the vines early shoot development next spring.

With some 6t/ha of Dry Matter (nutrients) trucked from your orchard and shipped overseas, this finite resource must be topped up if production levels are to be sustained. It can be tempting to cut fertilizer inputs to save costs as its negative effects won't be blatantly visual; you will still see that beautiful, dark, compost-like top soil that is prolific in the Bay of Plenty, even if it has become deficient in minerals. However, I have noticed how dramatically soil nutrients do drop, even from one season without fertilizer inputs. This of course is to the detriment of production levels.

Aongatete are happy to be able to provide fertilizer recommendations as a free service to help growers get a well balanced, practical and economic fertilizer program for the upcoming season. After all, after the orchardist, we have the most contact with your crops and get to know them very well through maturity, harvest, packing, cool storage and shipping. Fruit nutrition has a direct impact on all of these facets of the supply chain.

If you would like assistance with a nutrition program we can use your existing soil test results to generate a nutrient plan, or we can arrange a soil test as well. Soil test charges (as per Hill Laboratories schedule) are as follows:

**GOLD \$93.00 Basic Soil, Organic Matter, Boron**  
**GREEN \$69.00 Basic Soil, Organic Matter**

Please contact me if you have any queries or want to arrange a soil test/consultation.



Jacki McCormack  
Bachelor Applied Science  
Certificate in Sustainable Nutrient Management

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## BRENT HAYNES

Aongatete Coolstores Ltd would like to Congratulate Brent Haynes on his win in the Queensland Stock Car series in Australia along with his many successes locally. Many may have seen an article featuring Brent's successes in the Katikati Advertiser

Brent (19) grew up in Katikati and did his schooling in Katikati. He is now at BOP Polytechnic doing his Level 3 qualification in Road Transport.

Brent started racing at the age of 12 in Mini Stocks (smaller and less horsepower than the stock cars) and then moved into stockcars at the age of 16.



Recent highlights include:

Gold Cup 2009 - 1<sup>st</sup>

World of Stocks 2010 – 3<sup>rd</sup>

Queensland Stockcar Champion 2010 (First Kiwi to win since 1967)

Racing for the Bay Park Team

Brent is the son of Lloyd and Mary Haynes, kiwifruit growers and owners of Track and Trench Digger Hire. Prior to leaving for Australia Brent worked for Aongatete driving tractors in the harvest, and also did a stint of forklift driving.

The stockcar season has now finished and Brent has stripped his car down. Mural Town Engineering of Katikati has started building a brand new car for the 2010-2011 seasons. Brent will be going back to Australia next year to defend his title, and he is also hoping to win World of Stocks, which will give him the opportunity to compete in the English Series.

Brent would like to thank all his sponsors for their support.

## ADDITION TO ACL SUPPORT TEAM

Claire Glass has joined the Aongatete Team to strengthen our shipping and ordering systems now that we are a Supplier. Claire manages the WOCA (Web Order Collaboration Allocation) and SCM (Supply Chain Management) computer systems for us.

In the short time she has been here she has already streamlined our pallet ordering, picked up extra orders and, noticeably, she always has a happy smile to go with the day.

Claire, her husband John and daughter Lucinda decided to move to New Zealand three and a half years ago from the UK.

Having not been to New Zealand before they chose Tauranga from the map, and are now very happy with the lifestyle, and all that goes with our great region.

It is a pleasure to work with Claire during this hectic time of harvest, and from all the team at Aongatete we welcome you and your family.



## CA 2010 – MAY UPDATE

It is now nearing the end of May, and we have currently loaded and sealed nine of our CA (Controlled Atmosphere) stores. This year, we have been driving our harvest of CA crops even more towards best practice – this means harvesting at an average of 7 - 9° brix, an average pressure of no less than 6 kg F, and where possible, high dry matter fruit.

Due to the rapid increase in brix seen very early this season, harvesting for CA started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April this year, with all CA stores being loaded in no more than 2 days. I am again carrying out monitoring for both pressure and brix prior to every CA store being sealed. This will provide us with valuable information by letting us estimate which stores may need to be classed as short-term, but also letting us get a better handle on *Botrytis* risk, as well as allowing us to look back at the end of the season to review what worked and where we may need to make improvements for 2011.

Our CA programme has developed significantly over the last 3 years – we now know the exact state that a line of fruit entered CA in, and are getting a really good idea of those factors which can decrease the storage period. Our intensive pre-harvest monitoring has also allowed us to identify areas of orchards that may not be suitable for CA, thereby ensuring that only the most suitable crops are placed in storage. Hopefully all these measures will maximise the performance of the 2010 CA Programme.

I will continue writing updates, and letting you know how CA is going this season. Thank you to all those Growers who agreed to commit some or their entire crop for storage. If you have any questions on the CA process, please do not hesitate to contact either your Client Services representative, or me.



Christopher Clement  
Post-Harvest Technical Support

## THANK YOU CLIVE

Aongatete Management were delighted to receive a call from the press recently, informing us that Aongatete had received recognition for its participation in the Recognised Seasonal Employment Scheme (RSE), and that Tony Benny's Country Calendar programme "From the Islands" had taken second place in a major international journalism award, announced in Belgium recently.

Aongatete Coolstores environmental and social policies in relation to providing for their employees enhanced the benefits of their employees participation in the programme which followed them from home to New Zealand, and drew conclusions about the challenges and positive outcomes for them on their return home to the Pacific.

Aongatete Management thanks Clive Exelby for the excellence he brings to the company's participation in this scheme.



Clive Exelby  
Packhouse Manager

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