



**AONGATETE**  
*advanced horticulture*

September 2010

## Newsletter

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### AONGATETE - ADVANCED HORTICULTURE

Aongatete has had an exciting few weeks, with our open day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September as well as some great recognition through the industry and the media for some of the exciting developments we and our industry partners are currently working on.

The open day was a great success with over 70 people coming through the facility over the three sessions that were held. The key feedback from people attending was that it was a great opportunity to have a look at a packhouse during operation. It was also an eye opener for visitors how Aongatete's investment in post harvest technology is creating the potential to improve efficiency, and drive value for supplying growers. Thank you to those attending, as well as the Aongatete team for the fantastic job done in transferring the key points of difference to all who attended.

If you missed the opportunity to view our packhouse during the open day, feel free to contact a member of our Grower Services Team, who will be more than happy to show you our exciting operation.

Some changes to the way our Horticultural Team operates are underway to improve efficiencies, and to continue to improve the orchard Lease, Management and Contract services that we provide. If you are interested in exploring a Lease or Management Contract please do not hesitate to contact your Grower Services Rep.



Allan Dawson welcomes visiting Growers to the Open Day

We hope that your orchards have fared well through the recent "Weather Bomb". Shredding of leaves in Gold and stunted growth in all cultivars including recent grafts being stunted by the wind and cool temperatures can have an impact on your potential return. Please consult your Grower Services Rep, or Jacki McCormack if you would like to discuss possible options to help kick start your crop once the weather clears.

Some changes are being made to Aongatete's Grower documentation, which includes the update of this publication. The Aongatete Team hope you continue to enjoy it!

The Grower Services Team

## GAP—NEW CONTROL POINT 11.5.2 HEALTH & SAFETY

If you are the management system owner and have signed a Health and Safety policy, you are required to have formal Health and Safety training. We have acquired an external trainer who will conduct 2 sessions here at the packhouse to cover this.

These sessions will take place:

- Monday 11th October at 5.30pm and;
  - Wednesday 13th October at 5.30pm.
- and take a maximum of 2 hours.

At the end of the training, you will be issued with a certificate to cover the above control point to be compliant.

Please RSVP by 9th October to Janice on (07) 552 0916 extn 701 or 0275 11 4443. Email [janice@coolstore.co.nz](mailto:janice@coolstore.co.nz)

## ZESPRI—GAP (GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICE)

It is GAP time again and all Growers should by now have received their Grower Manual which includes a GAP update. Please read this and complete the enclosed GAP Checklist prior to your Aongatete inspection. Zespri require all GAP inspections to be completed by the 31<sup>st</sup> January, as they are also required to be audited before the end of February 2011

This year we will not be charging for your inspections. However, there will be a \$50.00 charge for late cancellations (you must advise us a minimum of 24 hours prior to your appointment if you cannot be available, to avoid this charge), and \$100.00 per hour if an inspection is required after the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

If you have not yet received your new manual, either by post or off the Zespri Canopy website, please phone Kate McDermott on 07 572 7692, or James Jacobs on 07 572 7636 at Zespri.

Please phone Janice on 07 552 0916, extension 701, on mobile 0275 114 443, or email [janice@coolstore.co.nz](mailto:janice@coolstore.co.nz) anytime after the 24<sup>th</sup> of September to make your appointment .

## HIVE AUDITING

GOLD pollination is just around the corner now so arranging hives for orchards should be right up the top of the priority list. We have a strong focus on the importance of hive quality at Aongatete and there are some new programmes emerging in this area.

Hive auditing results from the Zespri Focus Orchard Network (FON) have uncovered some serious issues with the quality of hives being supplied to the industry. This has raised some big questions around how to ensure that growers, can be assured that they are getting what they pay for. Well pollinated fruit is critical to the profitability of the orchard and Hayward fruit is particularly unforgiving where pollination is concerned. A poor pollination means small and misshapen fruit for the season which can easily halve the orchard's potential productivity and creates an expensive season of thinning ahead.

Aongatete has been running a hive auditing programme internally over the past few seasons with good results. This year we are looking at expanding this service to offer an affordable hive auditing service to the wider grower base. This will give growers an opportunity to learn whether the hives they are sourcing are value for money or they are severely limiting the production of their orchard.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for a discussion about this service. Attached in this mailout is a pollination contract. It is highly advised that growers use contracts with their Hive Suppliers so the details and expectations of the service are well outlined to both parties.



Jacki McCormack  
Horticulture Technical Manager

## ORCHARD MANAGEMENT PLANS

Aongatete will be offering a new service this spring to assist growers in driving productivity levels on their orchards. The process involves a full evaluation of the property and a formal assessment and management plan to implement over the growing season. All you need to do is book in with your Grower Services Rep or Jacki McCormack to visit the orchard and go through the consultation process with you. After this you will have a fully documented programme and plan of attack for the growing season. We look forward to taking this opportunity to work with you on your orchards performance so don't hesitate to contact us regarding the programme or to make a booking.

Jacki McCormack  
Horticultural Technical Manager

## REPORT ON THE ZESPRI AGM

There have been many newspaper comments on the Zespri AGM and I do not need to cover all the bases in my own take on the event. So straight to the point – Resolution 9. Thank you all, I am sure you played your part in getting this passed by a stunning majority – 89.45% of the votes cast. For clarification, I will repeat the resolution.

“That ZESPRI co-operate with NZKGI, and/or other grower representative bodies, to simplify the current payment systems improving transparency and making cash flow timing to growers as equitable as possible, implementing appropriate changes to achieve these goals in time for the 2011 season. Reports on the implementation of this project are to be given in December 2010 to NZKGI's Forum meeting and advised to growers in that month's Kiwiflier.”

The resolution creates an obligation on Zespri to work on simplification, in co-operation with NZKGI and/or any other grower representative bodies. These latter include the KISS committee, the Aongatete Coolstore grower trust, the Green Growers Association or indeed the Katikati Fruitgrowers Association and others.

The reason these were included is that NZKGI has yet to demonstrate its commitment to payment

simplification.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the vote.

Grower/shareholders think the current payment system should be simplified. Of course there is nothing in the resolution which indicates how.

The vote appears to be at odds with NZKGI, where grower representatives seem undecided on this issue. If NZKGI actually reflected the opinion of growers, there should have been 36 members pushing for simplification.

NZKGI relies on a system where growers raise issues of concern with their KGI representatives to bring up at KGI meetings. There is no provision for a poll of growers, whereas such a provision for a poll of shareholders exists within Zespri's constitution.

The Stage III review of our industry structure allowed us to get a better single desk deal than apple growers got, so lets not knock it. However, the “promise” of an extra 50c a tray hid the structure proposal that Zespri would deal with Suppliers and Suppliers would deal with growers. Growers were to be “clustered” around entities. Even in the current negotiations for the 2011 supply contract, the issue of whether Suppliers are agents or principals is still undecided. Remember that Suppliers do not buy your fruit at submit, and have bailees insurance to cover any fruit loss attributed to bailee negligence. The fruit still belongs to you the grower and it is provided to Zespri under your name. The proceeds belong to you.

Growers have steadfastly resisted the idea that the only relationship they could have with Zespri was as shareholders, not as growers. Zespri has also resisted this model by continuing to keep contact with growers via the Kiwiflier and the loyalty contract, and instituting the industry “triangle”. Thus the industry structure is in limbo neither one thing nor the other. In my opinion, Resolution 9 brought this to a head. The huge majority supporting the resolution were voting as shareholders (because they had to be to be able to vote), but were expressing their preference as growers.

Alan Sutherland  
Trustee

## 2010 MATURITY SUMMARY

The American novelist Mark Twain once famously commented – “It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog.”

Aongatete’s maturity monitoring programme is perhaps, one of the best embodiments of this image within the New Zealand Kiwifruit industry. Aongatete is not a large supplier, and we don’t have the biggest lab. But our monitoring capabilities during the harvest season are efficient & effective with impressive results.

In 2010, Aongatete was able to clear, pick and pack 2.69% of the Gold First-Past-the-Post (FPP) KiwiStart caps, and 4.10% of the Hayward FPP cap. In relation to our industry share of these crops, this relates to Aongatete being able to supply approximately 1.3 times our industry share of both the Hayward and Gold caps during the KiwiStart period alone.

The maturity monitoring carried out by the Aongatete lab is also a driver behind our Main Pack and controlled atmosphere (CA) programme performance in 2010. This year Effective monitoring allowed us to identify orchards with increasing levels of maturity and start to lay down CA stores and harvest Main Pack crops a month earlier than last year, helping us to attain a high level of

performance for our Main Pack and CA Green crops.

Aongatete’s maturity monitoring programme is an important contributor to our Growers OGR Performance. We will continue to develop this ‘Advanced Horticulture’ programme further to maximise our Growers returns.

Christopher Clement  
Postharvest Technical Support

## SPRAYWATCH SERVICE

As many of you will be aware, this season Aongatete Coolstores is using the Spraywatch system to ensure that all the properties that could be affected by our orchard spraying are adequately notified.

Some Growers have complained about receiving multiple messages from the Spraywatch call service.

Please listen to the entire message – **it is necessary to press ‘1’ after listening to the spray notification** to tell the system that you have heard the message, otherwise the system will call you back. We have talked to Spraywatch, and they are attempting to find a solution as well.



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