

APATA AVOCADO UPDATE

February 2009

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Apata Grower Summit “Captivating Success”

Words such as ‘captivating’, ‘riveting’ and ‘thought provoking’ are words being used by Apata growers to describe the 2009 Apata Grower Summit, which was held on 17 February at the Sebel Trinity Wharf in Tauranga.

Over 250 Apata growers from around New Zealand heard first hand from international business journalist Rod Oram and the Rt Hon Jim Bolger, who presented exclusively to Apata growers on future world trends and the impacts on our industry and businesses.



Rod’s presentation on the global economic crisis and what it means for New Zealand and our businesses kept the audience riveted with explanations of the events that have contributed to the current crisis. He managed to effortlessly explain what is a very

complex situation, in a manner and style that made sense to every single member of the audience.

Mr Bolger’s presentation focused on the potential challenges and opportunities that the current global conditions might have for food producers globally. His very frank and honest view point on this topic got the audience thinking hard about their role in the world’s food chain and what our industry can do to help fix the situation.

The topics generated many questions from the audience who had a chance to further question Mr Oram and Mr Bolger on their opinion on a wide range of topics such as foreign exchange impacts, and what they should be focusing on as growers and business owners.

Growers can request a copy of Rod Oram’s presentation by emailing cassandra@apata.co.nz or cs.admin@apata.co.nz. Alternatively please call 07 552 0535.

We welcome your feedback on this event, as this will help us shape the next Apata Grower Summit, which will be held in February 2010. Please forward your feedback to our Communications Manager Cass Thurston on 07 552 0535 or email cassandra@apata.co.nz



Export Season Wrap Up: Therese Temple

The 2008/2009 export season has come to an end in both the Bay of Plenty and Northland regions for Apata. Both packhouses had their final pack day on 13 February and both regions should be proud of their efforts as they have done a great job.

The Bay of Plenty has packed out at 64.37% which is above the industry average of 59% for the season YTD. We are in within 1.1% of our estimate in the Bay and our final figure was 169,347 export trays. Below are the final pack-outs for the Bay of Plenty.

Export	169,347.4	64.37%
Local Market	70,439.9	26.77%
Reject fruit	23,301.2	8.86%
Total Trays	275,681.4	100%

Northland's final export for the season was 238,325.4 trays, so our total export trays for the season came to 407,672.8. The final figures from the industry are not yet out as I write this but based on the industry estimate Apata/Primor are 28.5% of the industry this season.

Our focus has already turned to next season which looks like we will be packing more than double what was packed in the Bay this year. Focus should be on keeping fruit for all market access and also on fruit quality. Because of the volume of fruit-set, growers should be trying to put as much fruit into an export tray as possible, as that's where the best return will be.

Thoughts of using Lorsban should be fading as we could start as early as August – September to the USA. Greenhouse thrips will be on the rise and leaf-roller volumes have increased dramatically with the humid weather we have been having. Don't wait for pest pressure to increase beyond the recommended thresholds, as it is harder to gain control once levels have risen. Make sure you check the effectiveness of the chemical a week after application.

What crops I have seen around the Bay appear to have much better coverage than the previous 'on' year in the Bay although I have seen a lot of branched and spindly growth which is unusual. Better coverage means there will be less sun exposure and less reject fruit due to sun-burn. It also means that many orchards may have a crop again next year! Now that would be good news to all concerned in the industry. If you have set a good crop for next season make sure you have an adequate fertiliser programme to meet all the needs of your trees. Included in this newsletter is a decision tree that was created several years back by a group of growers who helped create the best practice in the avocado manual. The decision tree came about as growers considered all factors that could affect pollination and fruit set and it may help to check and see if you have covered all these factors on your orchard to give the best chance at setting a crop each year.



Do You Want To Go To The Australian/New Zealand Avocado Conference?

Below is a list of what is on to help you plan.

Date	Activity	Time
17 -19 July 2009	Optional pre-conference tour through orchards around the Brisbane area. Includes 3 nights accommodation, 2 dinners and bus.	Departs 10.00am on 17 July.
Please note – you will need to arrange travel from Brisbane to Cairns if planning on attending the pre-conference tour		
21 July 2009	Conference registration Welcome reception	4.00pm – 8.00pm 6.00pm – 8.00pm
22 July 2009	Conference registration Conference sessions	7.30am – 6.00pm 8.00am – 5.30pm
23 July 2009	Conference registration Conference sessions Conference dinner	8.00am – 5.00pm 8.00am – 5.00pm 7.00pm – 11.30pm
24 July 2009	Optional field trip to Atherton Tableland	7.30am – 5.30pm

Apata will be hosting a group to the main conference but will not be attending the pre-conference tour. If you wish to attend the conference this year you can register online at www.anzagc.org. The prices for registration can be found at this website. Please register your interest as soon as possible so you receive a brochure outlining all the details of the conference. You will be able to register online for the conference, dinner and optional field trip to Atherton Tableland.

Apata will organise group flights and accommodation. We are currently working through costs at the moment, but can update you on the following:

Conference dinner – AUD\$100

Orchard tour post-conference – AUD\$70


Direct flights – approximately NZD\$1,200 per person

Accommodation – will be a maximum of AUD\$1,100 for 5 nights twin share.

If you wish to attend the conference as part of the Apata Tour Group, please register with Therese Temple on 07 552 0537 or 0274 835 699. Or phone our Grower Services Coordinator Gaye Sycamore on 07 552 0512.

Have you heard of UHP Technology?

Would you like to know what this is all about? Sometimes in this industry we assume that because we have all the information about something, that growers should know all about it too. This is not the case as we found out at the last Apata Avocado Growers Committee meeting.



We have scheduled a meeting for Northland growers on Friday 13 March, starting at 11am at Sherwood Park Golf Club, and a meeting for Bay of Plenty growers on Thursday 14 March, 3pm at Omokoroa Hall. This is your chance to learn what Ultra High Pressure technology is all about. We will keep you updated in the coming bulletins. The AIC has sent out a letter on behalf of UHP Technologies Ltd to get some feedback from growers on their support for this venture.

Crop Estimation Competition

At the Advantage 2008 workshops we ran a competition for growers to guess their total bins harvested, and export percentage.

Thanks to all the growers who entered this competition. The winner is Hilton and Margaret Perry, who guessed 100 bins with 75% export. Their actual was 104 bins, with 75.69% export. Hilton and Margaret win a \$100 restaurant voucher. Congratulations!

We would like to thank all growers for their support this season and wish you all the best for the coming one. No storms, hail frost or wind please. It's not too much to ask for is it?


Primor Update: John Carroll

Just one week ago we loaded our final shipments for the season, with that fruit going to Australia. This brings to a close a season that saw Primor export over 470,000 trays of fruit, or close to one third of the New Zealand crop. Again, we have shown growth, which is very satisfying given it reflects the support of more and more growers. And while market share is not such an important measure, the responsibility we are given by you all is appreciated and respected.

As a recap, the market's performance pre-Christmas was mixed. The Australian wholesale market was particularly sloppy, really based on the sheer volume of fruit coming out of Western Australia (WA). This was new territory for them, handling far and away their largest ever crop, and there were some creaks and groans as they tested their distribution network to the fullest. We were not immune to these effects, and values were softer than had been anticipated.

At the same time, the World's credit crunch seemed to have some effect, albeit less than in some other categories that households spend their money on. Equally, the major cities containing the bulk of consumers suffered some lousy weather - Sydney and Brisbane in particular. So it was a relatively sobering Christmas, and a bulletin item I put out just prior to that reflected a somber mood.

But the New Year arrived to a new beat, and the remaining crop volume from Western Australia had been downsized. Wholesale market values rose quickly, and while they settled, they lasted at good values right through January and into February. In the end, this will be a year providing well above average returns, but it did not end up as the banner year it might have. Yet in fairness, there are plenty of factors for that situation, and a look into other industries might reassure growers. We expect to have everything finalised for the current season by Easter; Good Friday this year is 10 April.



Top of mind just at the moment has been some disappointing late season quality, as some of the recent fruit has had been scruffy in appearance. There have been some incidences of anthracnose, but that is not the major worry. Both supermarket and wholesale customers have commented on the scruffier fruit, and we need to be careful that we do not get a reputation for letting our standards lower late season. We have a terrific group of customers in Australia, and beyond for that matter, and we must be mindful that we are always delivering them value for money.

Early indications suggest a mixed bag for next year's volumes, ranging from individual outstanding crops to some very mediocre. Overall, however, the industry believes there is a crop similar to two years ago in total volumes, but with higher expected Export volumes, courtesy of a better anticipated packout. Our proposal to growers will be out in the not so distant future, and given the bigger volumes, we will be looking for early commitment in order to make early plans. The US and Japan loom as definite markets of importance this year, so all market access is very important. We also intend to develop some other opportunities in parts of Asia, opportunities that have been compromised with lighter crops and having to effectively "ration" fruit.

Northland Wrap Up: Steve Brown

A huge thank you to all the Northland growers for their patience and flexibility with harvest plans, which enabled us to provide Primor with what they wanted, when they wanted it.

We packed a total of 238,325 export trays, which was within .04% of our October estimate to Primor.

The Prodex team did a great job throughout the season especially in the last few weeks when picking in a sauna was the order of the day, so a big thanks to Tony, Colin and the team.

We now have a couple of weeks of down time, while the finishing touches to the packhouse upgrade happen, after which we will be finishing off the local market fruit that is still out there.

2009 Apata Northland Golf Extravaganza!

Sherwood Park Golf Course Millington Road, Whangarei


- Friday 13 March 2009
- BBQ lunch 12.30pm
- Tee off 1.00pm



Dig out your clubs, clean off the dust and rust, and join the Apata Northland team and our suppliers for an afternoon of golfing fun and frivolity!

In recognition at the lack of stamina of some participants, the Ambrose tournament will be limited to 9 holes.

There will be prize giving and refreshments at the clubhouse. Players need to bring their own clubs or hire clubs and trundlers at Sherwood Park.



Prior to the BBQ lunch we will be having a presentation by Jim Clark from Far North Packers, on Ultra High Pressure (UHP) Technologies Limited

Jim's presentation will be supported by Apata, John Carroll from Primor and John Schnackenberg from the AIC.

The presentation will start at 11am at Sherwood Park Golf Club. We strongly encourage our avocado growers to attend this presentation.

Please RSVP by 6 March to reserve your place at the Apata Northland Golf Tournament. Phone Caroline Carter on 09 430 8003 or email wh.admin@apata.co.nz

2008-2009 Harvest Season: Niko Tahau

Well it's February and another avocado harvest is drawing to a close. In terms of meeting Primor's flow plan each week from October 2008 through to February 2009, this was easily the most accurate season I have seen.

We had enough picking resources to produce the peak weekly demand in four days picking per week, so even when bad weather halted the harvest, four days was enough to achieve the weekly orders.

Daily harvest meetings really improved the way fruit was flowed through the system as we were able to talk to Steve Brown and Niki Paget in the North and help each other out if we were under pressure to supply fruit. Or conversely, we would compete with each other for more share of the supply quota when things were running too slowly for our growers. Of course this was always done in good humour and with the fairest consideration for the growers concerned.

From an operations point of view the daily meetings were invaluable and I believe huge strides were made this year in terms of efficient utilisation of both machinery and human resources.

We look forward to harvesting next season's greatly increased crop armed with the knowledge that the current system and planned improvements will handle it easily.

Technical Update: Lindsay Heard

Leafroller Caterpillars are increasing in most orchards

Over the last week in some orchards I have found large leafroller caterpillars (10-15mm) chewing into new season fruitlets. It's important to have a good insecticide cover on the new fruitlets before the leafroller caterpillars establish between the two fruitlets.

Leaf roller levels have increased significantly over late January (two orchards have levels of 25%-26% leafroller). The high levels of leafroller means a batch of two insecticides applied at a three week interval will be required to reduce leafroller levels down below the 2% threshold.



Pest monitoring is recommended 10 days to 2 weeks after the insecticide applications to check effectiveness of the insecticides. Increase pest monitoring in orchards over high pest pressure periods and regular pest monitoring is recommended mid February. The long range forecast is for showers next week which is ideal weather conditions for leaf roller.

Be vigilant for leafroller and thrips- pest monitoring is strongly recommended in trees with good fruit numbers. The national crop is up this season and second grade damaged fruit will not achieve good returns.

Thrips will explode within one week at the end of February –early March so be on the look out for thrips. Pest monitor trees with good fruit numbers.

Check the export with holding periods. Apply a batch two insecticides at 21 day intervals in January. A number of growers that used this strategy of applying a batch of two insecticides consecutively i.e. two Success applications at 21 day intervals, achieved very good leaf roller control last season.

Attack 50EC is registered for leafroller control and over the last seven years has provided very good control of thrips. There new insecticides such as Proclaim that have registration for application in Avocados and has a withholding period to USA, Japan of 28 days, Australia 14 days. Withholding periods are listed on the Avocado Industry Website www.nzavocado.co.nz - go to Reports then click on Products.

Recent research has reported that for good resistance management of insecticides i.e. reducing the resistance of insects to insecticides long term, is to apply two insecticides consecutively rather than alternating insecticides.

Copper Fungicide Applications

With the very good fruitset in most orchards this season then fruit will be shipped to markets such as the USA and Asia next season, this means longer shipping times and longer selling times in the market place. We must maintain good quality fruit for next seasons marketing and therefore regular Copper applications are strongly recommended for new fruitlets to control fungal rot infections. Inner branches dying back or dead branches are the major source of fungal rot infection and removal of dead branches or opening the trees up by light pruning is recommended to increase light and air movement which will also reduce fungal rots.


Maintain good Fertiliser Applications

Maintain good fertiliser applications in February for the new flush and next season's flowering-fruiting wood. There is very good vigor in trees 4-7 years of age and fertiliser applications may need to be adjusted down slightly.

Nitrogen based fertilisers additional to the standard fertilisers need to be applied to trees not flushing new shoots and to high cropload trees i.e. Calcium Ammonium Nitrate, Potassium Nitrate, Calcium Nitrate.

Six Spotted Mite

In general the Six Spotted Mite levels have decreased in most orchards which is mostly due to the very high day temperatures in the orchards in late January. Oil sprays combined with Lorsban have worked well in late December-January. Monitor for Mites in Autumn-early winter and if required apply Mitemec or Avid plus spraying oil.



Check export with holding period and apply Avid or Mitemec in high water volumes with spraying oil at 0.25%-good spray coverage on the under side of leaves is important.

New Shoot Growth for Next Season's Flowering Wood-Irrigation

Most trees have flushed new growth for next season's flowering wood. Some non irrigated mature trees are struggling for new shoot growth.

Irrigation is important to size new fruitlets and to grow new shoots for next season's flowering wood.

Monitor soil moisture levels e.g. Irrometers - Tensiometers, Willow Bank Moisture meters and apply good rates of irrigation. I installed Willow Bank Moisture meters next to Irrometers, then recorded readings over 3 years and found the Willow Bank Moisture meters to be very accurate e.g. within 1-2 centibars of Irrometer readings. Irrometer readings have been up to 50-80 centibars in recent weeks. Good irrigation is required to get the Irrometer readings down to 10-15 centibars.

Injecting Phosphorous Acid

Injecting or trunk spraying of phosphorous acid is recommended in February especially for trees with high croploads or and for trees going into the "on year" for flowering, in other words all trees.

Last winter some trees looked good going into winter but crashed after the very mild wet winter.

It is important to apply phosphorous acid as a preventative in February rather than wait for the tree to have phytophthora and then to try to recover the tree in spring.

This is the second hot dry summer in succession and mature trees are starting to stress which makes them susceptible to phytophthora. Areas in the orchards with clay soil types have trees that are yellowing off over the last 3 weeks, this is the first signs of phytophthora root disease.

Contact Apata to book trees for injection and contact myself on 027 420 1544 to discuss phytophthora preventative control measures.

Apata Site Developments

Building progress is motoring along at Turntable Road. As you can see in the photos below, the foundations are being laid and the steel columns for coolstore 8 have started to go up.

You can see all the building action in person at the Apata Grower Open Day on Wednesday 11 March 2009. Invites for this event will be in the mail soon.





Help us find our apata bins this summer



We are on the look out for missing Apata bins this summer!

If you have seen any Apata bins in disguise hanging around your orchard, or know where some are, please contact us and we will come and get them from your orchard, so we can return these into our bin inventory. You can call us on 07 552 0512 or email csadmin@apata.co.nz to arrange pick up.

Please note: if you have any old bins that are in disrepair please **mark these clearly**, as we do not want to return these bins into inventory for harvest.



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