



PRESEASON JITTERS : BEVAN BAYNE

There is a feeling in the Grower Services team at present, its hard to describe, not jitters, probably more anticipation as the culmination of our planning and your growing comes to fruition.

The picking of early Gold last week has set the scene for the kiwifruit season proper to kick off in week 11 and we are prepared and ready to harvest your fruit in the most optimum way and quite frankly can't wait to get into it.

Last week I spent two days in the Far North (Houhora) visiting Apata avocado growers. While they are successfully growing export quality fruit, they face massive challenges with water tables, pan breaking, and phytophthora, many having to re-plant a third of their orchard which can take three to four years to crop. With many of these aspects out of their direct control, it appears to me in stark contrast to kiwifruit growing. While climatic and geographical conditions will always feature, kiwifruit growing is dominated by effective timely inputs and review. There is a successful patterned approach to take and those that take it usually end up in the top half of grower payments. These are inputs which you can control.

I am convinced that by focusing on the following points improvements can be made on your orchard:

1. Understand the history of your orchard.
2. Be clear in your consultations with your orchard manager or consultant, what are the goals for your orchard.
3. Ensure jobs are done on time.
4. Supervision, supervision, supervision.
 - a. Is the labour force trained?
 - b. Who's supervising?
 - c. Are they following the plan?

Yes its the time to do all the preharvest preparation, the load outs, the tractors, the crop grooming, but very soon comes the time for orchard performance review and while not meaning to tell everyone the obvious, these are often the parts that are not done well.

I wish you all the best for an excellent result during harvest and look forward to talking with you all soon.

Best regards



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Maturity Testing

Last week all active Gold maturity areas will be sampled by AGFirst as part of an Industry wide round to assess the overall maturity of the crop. It also provides a great opportunity for us to assess the relative positioning of the crops we will be packing. The results are available on the AGFirst web site, so if you don't have access it's a good idea to do so as you can see the results of any test we or AGFirst do as they become available.

This week we will be testing approximately half of the Green maturity areas in our care for the same sort of program. We will be checking weight, brix, dry matter, pressure and seeds using a 30 fruit sample only to facilitate as wide a screen as possible. Our aim is to test all orchards (rather than all maturity areas) over weeks 11 and 12.

Following on from these two weeks we will begin regular testing of orchards, targeting those that appeared close in week 11 and have been historically early.

For clearance this year the tests and criteria are:

Gold	Kiwistart	90 fruit hue, dry matter, pressure
	Mainpack	90 fruit hue, dry matter, pressure and 30 fruit brix
Criteria	Protocol A	average 110° hue angle, green fractile ≤ 113.7°
	Protocol B	Green fractile ≤ 111.1°
	Protocol N	Green fractile ≤ 107.5°
Green	Kiwistart	90 Fruit dry matter, brix and seeds
	Mainpack	90 fruit Dry matter, pressure, 30 fruit brix
Criteria	Kiwistart	Brix fractile ≥ 4.8, TZG ≥ 0.25, 97% black seeds
	Modified Brix	Brix fractile ≥ 5.2, TZG ≥ 0.25, 97% black seeds
	Mainpack	6.2 brix no more than 9 of 30 fruit less than 5.7

For main pack Green crops pressure is not required by ZESPRI. However, a thorough understanding of your fruit when it arrives in the packhouse is an important contributor to getting the best from that fruit through the storage season. Therefore, we will be requesting an additional test component.

As part of our Inventory Management Program we will also be visiting all orchards preharvest to assess canopy and fruit condition visually, so you may well see us about with our clip boards during late March and early April.

Spray Diaries

We have now uploaded the pest monitoring results to the ZESPRI website, so we would encourage you to get your spray diary completed. Before submitting the diary use the test audit facility to check whether your diary will pass or perhaps something is missing. We have observed full bloom dates are a frequent omissions. If you have any problems your Grower Services Representative is pretty familiar with the system or call ZESPRI grower help line on 0800 355 155.

Crop Estimates

We have completed our Green counting program. The overall results suggest that generally Green crops are a little smaller in size than last year and that fruit numbers are marginally down but the crops are also cleaner. Overall we come out in a similar position to last year. At a first glance, industry wise the trends appear counter to those we have observed with size up and numbers down, but in Katikati the results were consistent with our observations. We have a greater proportion of Katikati orchards in our sample than the industry so we are consistent when that is taken into account.

Thinning

Before harvest the last on orchard task is a final cosmetic thin. In Green orchards small fruit is unlikely to be a problem but the marginal flats, dumpy fruit and inverted bottoms are beginning to show through. In Gold orchards undersized fruit remain the most common issue.

With a short supply of Gold fruit this year ZESPRI will be taking M Band 14-18s as Class 1 supply and will take all size 42s as non standard supply (so there is no Kiwistart or loyalty payment for them). So thin to a size 42 – 71g at harvest.



MEET YOUR GROWER SERVICES TEAM



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CHANGES WITHIN THE GROWER SERVICES TEAM

George Doig has recently joined the Grower Services team. George has been assisting in the management of 145 hectares of kiwifruit for Oropi Management Services. George will bring to Apata a vast knowledge of the horticulture industry he has gained in both New Zealand and South Africa.

You are able to contact George on 027 4536 423 or email george@apata.co.nz

George is looking forward to working with you during the upcoming harvest.

Trina Hawkins has picked up where Gaye Sycamore left off. Trina has been working for Apata for a number of years and has hit the ground running for the Grower Services team. She has extensive IT knowledge and has welcomed the challenge of her new role.

You are able to contact Trina on 07 552 0512 or email csadmin@apata.co.nz

Niko Tahau is helping out the Grower Services team over the Kiwifruit season. Niko has extensive knowledge in the fruit industry and some of you may have already worked with Niko as he is part of Apata's Avocado Grower Services team here in the Bay of Plenty. You are able to contact Niko on 027 226 5489 or email niko@apata.co.nz

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