



on the vine

The 2011 OPAC Grower Newsletter

Issue 8

from the Managing Director

You should all have now received your OGR Reports for your orchard/s. It is pleasing to see that yet again OPAC growers are above industry averages for both green and gold returns. This has again been a joint effort between you as growers presenting excellent fruit and OPAC as your post harvest service provider taking good care of that fruit and maximising the revenue it can earn you.

The average forecast OPAC OGR for green is \$3.85 compared to an industry average of \$3.59. Along with this over 25% of the trays supplied through OPAC have generated an OGR of more than \$40,000/ha. The storage pool has had another good year and is projected to earn on average \$1.01/tray for OPAC growers compared with the industry sitting at \$0.43/tray. OPAC Green growers also a bigger share of kiwistart and taste income when compared with industry and was level with the industry for MDP. The highest tray's per hectare was an Opotiki orchard which yielded just under 15,500 trays per hectare.

OPAC Gold has had another great year with over 50% of trays supplied to OPAC earning over \$110,000/ha. The OPAC average OGR is forecast at \$8.71 which is \$1.37 better than the industry average. Some of the highest earning gold trays are sitting around the \$12.50 per tray mark which is an excellent return for these orchardists. OPAC Gold growers are well above industry averages for storage, kiwistart, taste and MDP which are the key drivers for an excellent result. The highest yielding gold orchard was an Opotiki orchard which managed just under 20,000 trays per hectare.

At this stage the OPAC fruitloss continues to run well below industry averages with Green sitting at 0.91% and gold sitting at 0.23%. We are currently comfortable with the fruit remaining in store and where this looks to be tracking, however sales volumes are behind last year and we expect fruit to remain instore much later than 2010 which will have an impact on final fruit loss.

With spring now here the orchards are starting to gear up in terms of workload. In particular an important part of this workload is pollination. OPAC is currently putting together and testing the pollen mills and pollination equipment to get it in top running order. Growers will be sent out information over the next week or so that will outline the OPAC protocols regarding the pollination process from flower collection,

milling and application. If you do have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Mark.

The local KVH group is still meeting regularly and is now keeping growers informed with a fortnightly newsletter outlining what the group is discussing. This group welcomes growers to attend these meetings and be part of the discussions. As of yesterday there was 312 orchards that have tested positive which include 3 in Tauranga, a Green orchard in Waihi and now an orchard in Whakatane. Ultimately it is up to you as growers to ensure that all precautions are taken on your orchards to protect it from Psa. With flowering about to happen now is the critical time in regards to orchard hygiene and protectant sprays to ensure that our regions stay Psa free.

Competitive Forces

You may have seen adverts for aggressive pricing amongst WBOP Post-Harvest operators. OPAC's normal process is to develop our policy and pricing in conjunction with OGL for publication in our contract early in the New Year, but as we are well aware of the market forces at play right now we are working now on developing our pricing earlier than in the past so you can make an informed decision.

As part of our price setting process we take into consideration what is happening with market pricing and also cost movements – all of this is relative to delivering our OGR performance.

OPAC is committed to our Growers optimising their orchard profitability. We understand the issues with Green viability and Gold sustainability with Psa's current status. We are aware that reducing costs would be of great help to Growers but we also know that making you the most money from the Zespri payment system is equally vital. OPAC's partnership with our Growers leads the industry in the last two years and I trust you will work with my team to ensure we keep it that way.

Should any of you want to discuss anything around these issues then please contact me or one of the team directly.

Craig Thompson

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Key dates

OGL Meeting
Tuesday 11th October
Opotiki Bowling Club
9am

OGL Annual Meeting
Tuesday 11th October
Opotiki Bowling Club
10.30am-11.30am

OGR Discussion
Tuesday 11th October
Opotiki Bowling Club
11.30am-12.30pm

OPAC Grower Update
Wednesday 26th October
4pm - 6pm



Technical Update

Gold

Now is the time to set your crop levels for the season. So far it is looking like we are getting a good bud break but a lower winter bud to flower conversion, this meaning that we are seeing only 2 or 3 flower buds per shoot compared to 5 & 6's seen in other years. This would seem right given the low level of winter chilling.

Early indications are that it wont require a lot of thinning to get the right number of flowers going into pollination. If you feel that you do need to reduce numbers then look to cutback spurs first and then to space out shoots.

The combination of cooler temperatures and possibly the copper applications look to be checking the leaf condition a bit. This can be improved with a foliar feed, I would look at either a seaweed based foliar or low levels of nitrogen, keep in mind the plants requirement for magnesium leading into pollination and for those in Gisborne to supplement the manganese levels.

Hayward

The budbreak is looking good on early green blocks so far. Again ensure that you have the base fertiliser on and they will be requiring the spring dressing soon. With spring frosts no doubt looming keep the weedstrip well sprayed and the grass short to radiate any heat that the ground will be accumulating during the day. Some time spent going over the winter pruning would be really beneficial. Now is the cheapest and easiest time to take off any weak spurs that were left during pruning or weak ends of canes.

New Varieties

For producing new varieties you will need to be protecting these from bird pressure, all 3 varieties look to be susceptible so therefore will require Mesurol sprays and other preventative measures to keep birds at bay. For newly grafted blocks ensure that you have a good dressing of slugbait around the base of the trunk. Make sure that any excess sap pressure is being removed either by a hole drilled through the trunk or a cut. The new growth will also need a string or similar to be trained to avoid breakages due to wind, try to avoid tapening the knew growth to the strings until they are around 300 – 400 mls long, better to loosely twist them around the training string.

Psa

We have released a spray programme that includes recommended protectants for PSA. This is a guide to be used. More important than the products used is the spray coverage, copper will only protect the part of the plant that it lands on.

As we go through a rapid growth phase up to flowering the timing is important, the general message with protectant sprays is little and often. KVH has indicated that they are sending water sensitive paper out to all Gro-Safe certificate holders. This doesn't take long to spread around in the canopy and assess the coverage that you are getting with the sprayer. If you require any help with this please contact either Mark or myself.

Brendan McQuade

Psa Update - Orchard in Whakatane Tested Positive for Psa-V

Kiwifruit Vine Health Inc has received a Psa-V positive result on a kiwifruit orchard in Whakatane. A verification process is underway and the result is expected next week.

A new Whakatane Priority Zone has been established. This includes 58 KPINS and 287 hectares of kiwifruit orchards. Updated maps are available on the KVH website.

Extensive monitoring of orchards is continuing. Growers are urged to take all necessary steps to protect their orchards. See factsheets and protocols on the KVH website.



Grower Pool Update

	Gold September	Gold YTD
Average	\$1.18	\$4.71
Highest	\$2.08	\$6.85
Lowest	\$0.39	\$2.37

	Green September	Green YTD
Average	\$0.44	\$1.70
Highest	\$0.73	\$2.40
Lowest	\$0.12	\$1.00

OPAC Growers Limited Annual General Meeting

The OGL AGM will be held on the 11th October at the Opo-tiki Bowling Club. If you are interested in becoming an OGL Director or have any questions relating to this please do not hesitate to contact either Graeme Redpath 315 7700 or OPAC to discuss.



Industry Updates

Work continues on establishing viable pollen treatment

ZESPRI, Plant & Food Research and industry pollen producers are continuing their research into establishing a commercially viable method of delivering Psa-clean pollen but do not have a commercial scale option yet.

Experiments carried out earlier this year, established that heat treating pollen at certain time-temperature combinations killed Psa while maintaining the viability of the pollen. Since then, it has become clear that the hydration level of pollen and bacterial load are additional variables, alongside temperature and time. This impacts on the effectiveness of heat treatment in killing Psa, meaning a commercial scale option, which can deliver clean pollen with confidence to the industry, is not yet available for use.

As well as the work on the optimisation of the heat treatment, KVH is working with pollen providers to develop an industry standard to ensure growers have access to pollen that has been sourced and milled in a way that mitigates the risk of Psa contamination. Pollen producers will be audited against this standard byASUREQuality and growers are advised to purchase pollen only from certified sources.

When finalised, the standard will be available on the KVH website (www.kvh.org.nz) so growers can review the protocols that pollen producers will be expected to follow.

Supply Update

For the 2011/12 season, almost 50 charter vessels and over 6,000 containers have now left New Zealand filled with the best kiwifruit in the world.

The final shipments of GOLD were made to Japan and Europe at the end of August, with other Asian markets continuing for several more weeks. Over 28 million trays of ZESPRI® GOLD have been exported this year to-date, an increase of nearly 30 percent at the same time last year. GOLD fruit loss is continuing to track very well, and offshore quality is ahead of the last couple of years.

GREEN is tracking in-line with 2010 shipped volumes with over 50 million trays exported. During the arctic blast in mid-August, two charter vessels were loaded without a hitch in Tauranga, but one vessel was delayed by a week as it was coming from Christchurch. GREEN quality performance has had very minor issues offshore and generally the market performance has been good.

GOLD ORGANIC is very close to complete shipment and GREEN ORGANIC has just under one third of the total submitted amount to go. Quality has been holding up well with no particular issues arising. Three quarters of the total 2011 New Zealand kiwifruit crop submitted has now been shipped. Fruit quality continues to be monitored closely for all categories.

Extracts from the August Kiwiflier

Seeing Red

On the back of encouraging Japanese consumer sensory results last year, two impressive red varieties were advanced into the ZESPRI grower block trial stage, followed by an increased area of grower block trials this year.

One variety is a sweet-tasting, yellowfleshed kiwifruit that has a vibrant starburst of red. This kiwifruit, known as 'red centre' had a high level of acceptance across consumers.

The other variety is a red-fleshed fruit with an intense, deep red centre which has a unique berry flavour. This kiwifruit, known as 'red solid', was more polarising for consumers but had a high level of liking with the 'early adopters', which is a strong indicator of the potential this variety has for stimulating the whole kiwifruit category.

While these are both red kiwifruit, they taste and look different inside, potentially representing different propositions for the markets. Grower block trial sites were increased to 8.95 hectares (from 6.2 hectares) due to the strong potential these varieties represent, the increased Psa risk and the desire to enable sufficient budwood for 2012 and onwards. In 2012, significant volumes of both varieties from trial sites (around 20,000 trays of each) will enable more extensive on-orchard, supply chain and in-market testing, providing the opportunity to potentially commercialise in June 2012.



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