

FRESH NOTES

A TECHNICAL UPDATE PUBLISHED BY HORTGRO SCIENCE



PACKHOUSE
ACTION GROUP

Fresh Notes feedback of a Packhouse Action Group (PAG) meeting held on 14 March 2024

Contact details are listed at the bottom of the Fresh Notes

Communication

[Handling Protocols for Pome and Stone Fruit on the Hortgro Website](#) Contact: Johan Strydom

Critical guidelines for the handling and export of pome and stone fruit are spelled out on Hortgro website. These guidelines are summarised to cover the most important elements in the handling chain and are backed by Supporting Documents that contain more detailed background information. The guidelines not only give the 'What to do' but also the 'Why'. Examples of supporting documents are:

Pome fruit

3.1.5 Bruising and control (Finlay): (<https://www.hortgro.co.za/science-tech-hub/pome-stone-handling-protocols/#pome-harvest>) This deals with principles of minimising bruising from harvest to packing.

8.4.1 Basic Cooling Principles (<https://www.hortgro.co.za/science-tech-hub/pome-stone-handling-protocols/#pome-forced-air-cooling>) Cultivar cooling sensitivities are spelled out and include temperature guidelines during normal and loadshedding periods.

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9.7.1 Loading of Reefer Containers - Fruit (Go to 9.7.1 and download the document here:

<https://www.hortgro.co.za/science-tech-hub/pome-stone-handling-protocols/#pome-transportation>)

This can be used as a training tool that contains all the elements in the process of loading a container.

Stone fruit

11.2.1A1 Plum Cultivar Shipping Temperature Regimes (Download document 11.2.1A1 here:

<https://www.hortgro.co.za/science-tech-hub/pome-stone-handling-protocols/#stone-shipping>)

Plum cultivars are very sensitive to shipping temperatures and vary a lot from cultivar to cultivar.

These guidelines are very important for:

- Production managers,
- Pack house managers,
- Cold store managers,
- Logistics service providers,
- Clearing and forwarding agents,
- Exporters

It is suggested that this information is shared within organisations to ensure that responsible staff members are fully aware of the demands in the handling and exporting fruit.

Conventional Shipping Protocols

Contact: Bernard Henning

Currently, the PPECB blue book (Act 9 of 1983), is in use but not being implemented for conventional shipping vessels. The revised Regulation R917 will be updated in due course.

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Update on Logistics Chain Efficiencies

Contact: Jacques du Preez

Twenty percent more fruit of all fruit kinds were exported in the early part of this season. Luckily wind delays were much fewer in February, allowing for a catch-up in vessel processing. New management is now in place in Transnet – at national level as well as the Cape Town Port, specifically at Transnet Port Terminals. Daily feedback on port performance is provided to the fruit industry at a “War Room”. Although legal opinion is being obtained regarding possible quality/damages claims, Hortgro was backing off from negative media exposure and claims to give the new management space to find their feet.

Private Sector Participation at the Cape Town port is still actively being pursued, amongst many other measures, to improve throughput and productivity.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) work group

Contact: Prof Wiehann

Steyn / Jacques du Preez

Hortgro is appointing an ESG person on 1 April 2024. The person will drive ESG work group, which will include packaging recycling, food waste, sustainability, environmental, carbon and human resources issues. Issues, identified by the plastic work group, that could be addressed by the new incumbent, include:

- Colour coding of plastic strapping
- Encourage plastic recyclers to become BRC accredited to supply the demand for food contact recycled plastic for packaging
- Become conversant with food safety legislation/standards
- Co-ordinate industry-wide response to pressure suppliers to meet market deadlines
- Become conversant with UN Plastics Treaty due to be finalised and ratified by end of 2024

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Next Generation packaging systems for Hi – Cube containers

Contact: Prof Wiehann Steyn

A report will be available after August.

Packhouse Benchmarking Project

Contact: Willem Coetzee / Hendrik

Claassen / Francois Malan

Frudata has completed the first round of benchmarking, and packhouses have provided positive feedback.

Packhouse Water and Energy Management Projects

Contact: Karlien Heyns /

Eddie Vienings

The project reports can be viewed on the PAG web site under Environmental 2024 [PAG Water](#)

[Phase 6 and Energy Phase 3:](#)

<https://www.hortgro.co.za/science-tech-hub/packhouse-action-group/>

The PAG Water project, of which Blue North concluded the 6th phase, has encountered a persistent challenge: a lack of reliable water-use data from participating packhouses. This data gap, caused by inconsistent metering across the industry, hinders efforts to accurately assess usage patterns and identify areas for conservation. By implementing standardised metering, packhouses can not only promote sustainability but also reduce costs through optimised water use.

To address this critical issue, Blue North proposes a collaborative industry-wide metering campaign. The campaign would include an educational component (workshops, articles), and a practical aspect (water meter mapping and planning), with the outcome of the installation of water metering, and establishment of record-keeping systems.

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This initiative would promote metering systems across packhouses, emphasising consistent monthly recording practices. This ensures data integrity and enables insightful trend analysis. By allocating water use data to specific activities, packhouses gain a granular understanding of their water profile and identify inefficiencies.

In essence, "you can't manage what you can't measure." Consistent metering is the key to unlocking the full potential of the PAG Water project and fostering a more sustainable future for the industry.

Fire Risk Project

Contact: Koos Bouwer

The project is scheduled to be completed by end-August.

Market Access Feedback

Contact: Jacques du Preez / Lindi Benic

Mexico

The Mexican inspector is expected to be here from weeks 16 – 23 (Apr – Jun).

Taiwan

The Taiwanese authorities required various submissions regarding the previous codling moth interceptions. The implicated entities and DALRRD provided required inputs into the submissions, with relevant assistance by Hortgro experts. During the upcoming Taiwan apple inspection visit, two inspectors will inspect orchards and packhouses and will also focus on the sites from where codling moth were intercepted.

There is a 2-week delay in their arrival, and they are expected towards the end of April. One of their requirements is that fruit bins must be covered during transport.

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Thailand

Two Thailand officials arrived recently to complete the Thailand apple audit inspection and their visits to the industry were well-received. The officials were favourably impressed by the orchards and packhouses and relevant export systems. They are particularly interested in traceability aspects.

Philippines

The market access process is still work in progress.

PAG Disciplines and Coordinators

Please contact the relevant person if you have any queries regarding the PAG.

Chairman – Koos Bouwer (bouweb@orangenet.co.za)

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