

**RSE UPDATE— (Recognised Seasonal Employees)**

Our RSE's are continuing to work hard and do a great job for Aongatete. Of the total 190 employed for the 2015 / 2016 season, recruited from Malaysia; Vanuatu; Nauru; Samoa; Tonga and The Solomon Islands, we said farewell to ten of the summer team two weeks ago and will say goodbye to the last 20 from this group on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May. A further twenty Vanuatu's will finish their kiwifruit orchard work for us on the 29<sup>th</sup> of May and under the NZ Government "Approval to Recruit" scheme, will then try their hands at grape pruning in Marlborough.

Remaining staff will complete the final harvest work and then commence winter pruning on our orchards.

**RSE STAFF ENJOYING SOME OF THE 'EVERYDAY' THINGS WE ENJOY HERE IN NEW ZEALAND....APRIL / MAY 2016**

VISITING THE PUMP HOUSE IN WAIHI

FISHING AT KAURI POINT

WORKING OUT AT THE GYM

**Aongatete Orchard and Grower Services Teams****Derek Edwards**

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# AONGATETE NEWS



MAY 2016 | ISO WEEKS 18-22 www.coolstore.co.nz | enquiry@coolstore.co.nz

**SUNGOLD - G3: MANAGEMENT POST PACKING****THIS ISSUE:**

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We have now just completed the packing of Sungold. With the maturity changes came a flow on affect into packing and coolstorage. A clearance of a maturity area could come with three different taste bands and four different protocols.

Last year life was simpler packing the Sungold with Taste bands being separated between large and smaller sizes, now it is by each size. Also into the equation comes the protocols which have different storage temperatures until they all reach full degreening.

This means when packing we have to match task protocols which can give many combinations when a KPIN is being packed onto another KPIN. So post packing we are dealing with a lot of part pallets to combine later for shipping. This has raised the question as to whether it is justified to have all these taste bands for each size. The proof will be evident in the market this year I guess.

**Nell Dawson—Aongatete Operations Manager 027 549 4998**

**HORTICULTURAL BUSINESS UPDATE**

It's harvest, harvest, harvest at the moment and within the Hort Team we have 100 plus pickers going flat out on most days, not to mention truck and tractor drivers, auditors and supervisors. While hard work, it's also very satisfying to be able to see the fruits of everyone's labour after what has been a tough and interesting season.

So far this harvest, the Aongatete teams have picked and carted over 20,000 bins of fruit and have as much again to complete. We are extremely pleased both with our progress to date and the quality of the picking having received some great feedback from Growers. Being the 'middle men' between the orchard and the packhouse, we are very aware of the role our picking plays in fruit quality and pack out performance. Care taken in harvest can pay significant dividends.

Post-harvest we are immediately applying a copper spray to orchards along with a foliar fertiliser.

Given the very warm and mild autumn we are also about to begin a programme of copper and urea sprays to assist in leaf drop for our early start orchards, as indications are that natural leaf drop may be later than normal this season and with winter pruning just around the corner nature may need a helping hand. A half rate of copper sulphate i.e. 600gm/100ml along with 2kg/100ml of urea has proven to be as effective as 1.2kg of copper sulphate and of course has the benefit of only adding half the copper to the system.

**Derek Edwards—Horticulture Business Manager 027 543 0741**

**GA FRUIT BEING PICKED INTO PLASTIC BINS—WEEK 17**



HAYWARD STANDARD MAINPACK CRITERIA

With the season running later than usual we have a number of traditionally kiwistart growers harvesting in Mainpack this year who are not familiar with the standard mainpack clearance criteria which is:

**Brix:** Average of 6.2° with not more than 9 fruit ≤ 5.7°  
**MTS:** 15.5%

**MTS = Minimum Taste Standard.** The MTS for Hayward is the minimum average dry matter percentage required as measured in the most recent maturity clearance sample.

NEW GOLD 3 LICENCE RELEASE 2016

Growers should have received their 2016 Licence Application, Overview and Rules from Zespri. If you have any questions about the variety, converting, etc please contact our Aongatete Grower Services Team for assistance.

Important to note are the following dates:

**23 May 2016** Application Process Opens  
**1 June 2016** Closing date for Bids  
**From 20 June 2016** Successful Bidders Notified

Zespri have advised they will supply female budwood only to KPINs that do not already have the Gold3 variety. They will not supply Male Budwood to any orchard and will not supply female wood for KPINs that are growing G3. This means if you are placing a bid you may need to store budwood from your orchard before you even know if your bid has been successful. It may also mean there will be a strong demand for early grown male budwood. Aongatete want to support our Growers as much as possible and are investigating sources of wood that may be available. We will also store budwood for our Growers as per a separate article in this edition. Grafters can be in demand and we are working on booking contractors for our Growers.

If you are bidding for licence this year please discuss your intentions with our Grower Services Team. We are not trying to find out prices being bid but are keen to find out how many hectares our Growers may be converting and what their grafting/budwood support needs might be so we can support them to the best of our ability. Should there be limited resources we will allocate on a first in basis also making special consideration for male wood for those non G3 Growers. We hope to be able to assist all of our Growers but this may be dependent on early registration of requirements so please speak to one of our team as soon as possible even if you are not sure whether your bid will be successful.

Do not mulch your G3 prunings without assessing your budwood needs.

BUDWOOD STORE

We will be storing budwood for our Growers converting to new licence again this year. There will be changes to procedures due to the harvest still being underway in June and binstore packing, as well as the packhouse storage capacity being at maximum levels during this time. If you wish to store your budwood please contact your Grower Services Rep who can provide the Terms and Conditions for storage this year.

**Tracey Chinnery— Aongatete Grower Services Manager 021 664 276**

FERTILISERS

Fertilisers are a great tool for kiwifruit growers to improve plant growth; this then increases crop yields and increases fruit quality, thus improving the profitability of the orchard. But it is not just as easy as spreading fertiliser, first you must understand the soil pH, its ability to hold nutrients, its soil structure and soil health.

Using organic applications such as composts and manure you can improve soil structure by forming crumbs with greater pores for water and air to sit between; this allows easier access of nutrients, water and air to the plants roots. Using calcium based products such as lime and gypsum will improve soil structure and lime will also decrease acidity which in turn increases soil pH. They also improve the storage-ability of the fruit by slowing the cellular breakdown while in coolstore.

For Fertiliser applications I prefer to follow two guidelines; a ‘*little and often*’ method and correct application timing of fertilisers. This allows for all nutrients applied to be up taken by the plants and the correct times without excess being leached further into the water systems, meaning no fertiliser and money is wasted. With the winter base largely consisting of potassium and a good spread of other nutrients this sets the crop up well for the season, while the two spring side dressings just top up nutrients at high growth periods of the crop by applying mostly magnesium and calcium. And finally some orchards may need a summer dressing as a final push for canopy growth in December which is mainly nitrogen. This approach is due to the high solubility of potassium which if over applied can easily leach away into the water systems.

The ACL fertiliser program is about to start soil testing in the next few weeks and lime and gypsum applications will begin in June. If you require soil testing, fertiliser recommendations, supply and spreading please contact me soon as possible.

**Ethan England—Hort Technical Team Leader 021 021 57062**

ONCE HARVESTING IS FINISHED IT WILL BE TIME FOR WINTER PRUNING

