

# Compac cuts out costs with "smart" technology

Applying the latest technology is helping fruit packhouses drive up margins and pack smarter, says Compac's **Phil Prior**

**C**OMPAC Sorting Equipment has several installations of its InVision 9000 blemish pre-graders under its corporate belt. In the US, Washington State's Larson Fruit and Zirkle were one of the first to adopt the new technology in its packing sheds. While the technology was not new – having been used in citrus for some years – its application to apples was.

Next off the block is a blemish pre-grade unit for Batlow Coop in Batlow, NSW, Australia, currently being manufactured by Compac and scheduled for installation in time for the coming season.

Compac's Phil Prior says it is relatively easy to install the company's blemish pre-grader into an existing line, rather than as a two-stage packing process, with a corresponding improvement in staffing, sorting efficiency, fruit handling and shed capacity.

John Paynter, packing in New Zealand under the Yummy brand, is an early convert to blemish pre-grading, according to Mr Prior. "His mantra is 'we want the right fruit in the right box in the right market on the right day'. Since installing Compac's pre-grader, he's reduced staffing numbers in the sorting area and believes in the company's goal of packing superior product through using electronics to see the fruit before human eyes light on it," says Mr Prior.

"It's changed the whole way we run the business," says Mr Paynter. "Because we have more flexibility we are able to match marketing requirements very quickly. We've got a four lane pre-grader running with a high level of integrated mechanisation with a low level of staff to get the best results for business sustainability."

Also in New Zealand, Hawkes Bay's Longview Packing is undergoing a major re-design to become a showpiece site for fruit packing design that will incorporate the latest blemish-sorting technology to the shed's apple crop sorting, weighing and packing processes.

"Longview is the first site in the country to plan and install a new equipment layout design to make the

company worked alongside Compac to design a facility based on years of combined practical experience as well as looking to meet the changing environment of the industry in the future.

"What it will mean is that we have another means to remain competitive through this tough time in the market," he says, adding that that the new layout



Compac says its equipment helps packers cut costs

most of Compac's blemish sorting technology," says Mr Prior.

"The new layout includes Compac's grading, sorting, sizing, and packing technology as well as the company's latest infrared camera technology enabling fruit to be accurately sorted according to blemish and defects."

Michael Caccioppoli of Longview Packing is looking forward to the advantages of the new facility. He says the

and technology will also give Longview Packing, and the exporters that pack through the facility, a considerable advantage over the conventional packer exporter groups with its flexibility.

Mr Prior says that despite a global downturn in the apple industry, Compac is seeing interest in its blemish grading for apples remaining strong as packers search for solutions to save costs and add efficiency to their facilities. ★