

FRESH NOTES

A TECHNICAL UPDATE PUBLISHED BY HORTGRO SCIENCE



Fresh Notes feedback of a Packhouse Action Group (PAG) meeting held on 31 October 2019. Contact details are listed at the bottom of the Fresh Notes.

Moratorium on High-Cube Containers

Contact Andy Connell

Feedback is that the Department of Transport believes that it is still necessary for them to commission a study into the safety of HC containers. Their intention is to extend the “moratorium” for a further period of 18 months – i.e. until 30 June 2021. In that period they hope to complete the study and come up with a final recommendation to the Minister. Their intention is to convene another meeting of the working group as soon as possible, so that everyone can agree on the way forward, and to ensure that the extension can be gazetted.

Revised steri market protocols for newer cultivars Contact: Henk Griessel

Commercial trials had been successfully conducted at a shipping temperature of 1°C. A meeting will be held with PPECB to revise the protocols.

Load-shedding and load out temperatures

The PAG has applied for a dispensation for another season.

The dispensation applies to the possible build-up of uncooled or partially cooled fruit at cold stores due to load-shedding, for the maximum load out temperature tolerance for apples of +3.0°C to be applied, and for winter pears +2°C. (Presently set point plus 2.0°C which in practice normally equates to a tolerance of +1.5°C). The dispensation applies only in the case of power cuts, and this needs to be verified with the local PPECB inspector.

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This arrangement cannot be applied to summer pears due to the risk of quality problems.

Plastics Strategy Contact Dr Malcolm Dodd/Bryce McIntyre

The Plastic Group has met on several occasions and has developed a plastic matrix based on Tesco's red, amber and green categorisation of the type of plastic used in the packaging process.

Members met with the UK organisation Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which is a UK based organisation that is driving the Plastic Pact in a move towards creating a circular economy for plastics in the UK. Most of the major UK retailers are signed up to WRAP and therefore subscribe to the policies set by WRAP – (e.g. red, amber, green guidelines for plastics).

Fruit SA is planning to become an associate member of the SA Plastic Pact, which includes the local retailers. The Plastic Pact is scheduled to be launched in late January in Cape Town.

An Industry strategy should incorporate the following:

- Become a member of the SA Plastic Pact
- Accept and endorse the WRAP classification and its implementation
- Strive for plastic free
- Implement policies to satisfy the major markets of the future
- Encourage individual suppliers to adopt a circular plastic economy

WRAP's targets for 2025 are:

- Take actions to eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging items through design, innovation or alternative delivery models
- 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable
- 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted
- 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging

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The latest Fresh Quarterly <https://www.hortgro-science.co.za/download/4922/> features several articles on plastics and recycling, including:

50 Years of plastics

Sustainable plastic manufacturing

Join the circular plastic economy

The rise of edible coatings

New and completed plastic research projects

Plastic packaging categories in the fruit industry

Sodium ortho-phenlyphenate (SOPP)

Contact Bernardus Henning

The MRL for apples is 0,01 ppm and pears 20 ppm. It is your responsibility to check that none of the products you use contain SOPP as a by-product/additive, whether declared on the label or not.

PPECB conducted 14 000 fruit residue tests of all fruit kinds and there were miniscule exceedances in general on SOPP, and none on deciduous fruit. A further 91 swab samples were taken from drains, door rubbers, floors, cartons, bins, walls and coils. Only one wall sample had a minimal residue.

All chemical cleaning agents at container depots tested negatively.

All pallet samples taken at packhouses had SOPP residues. This is despite Hortgro protocols specifying no SOPP treatments of pallets. This will be taken up with pallet manufacturers. Have your pallets tested and have a documented procedure that specify where the risk will fall if you have a rejection for SOPP.

CA Meeting presentations

Contact Richard Hurndall

Information on the meeting can be obtained at:
<https://www.hortgro.co.za/news/ca-facility-celebrates-first-birthday/>.

Presentations are available on: <https://www.hortgro-science.co.za/presentations/hortgro-pome-ca-meetings/>

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PAG Disciplines and Coordinators

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

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