



Overview

Again, the market in general is said to be ticking along, as it has been for a large part of the summerfruit selling season. From what I have been able to ascertain, the collective fruit and vegetable market has been in this mode from spring last year. Summerfruit, it would seem, has done well in terms of the volume grown and the volume sold, but in a sluggish market with high production, the price per unit sold, has suffered.

The quality of the product was very good, even exceptional until the rain that tore apart the Central Otago cherry crop and flooded the odd orchard. Since then, the quality of Hawke’s Bay and Central Otago fruit has again been very good. Only just now am I getting reports of rejected lines and the comment that we need to finish this season with consumers anticipating the next. I am also told that the shortage of skilled labour has impacted on the ability to harvest the last of the fruit.

This publication (the last of the season) is collated from discussions with retailers, wholesalers, marketers and growers plus my own observations on orchard and at retail. Sometimes those conversations have been two minutes long and at other times 22 minutes. I sincerely thank all those who have taken the time on behalf of the summerfruit industry. Thanks also to Victoria Harris for knocking my rubbish English skills into shape.

I look forward to starting this story again in November.

Temperature

Growing degree days, GDD, is a model I have mentioned throughout the season. From September until yesterday Bay View has accumulated 1,415 units – an average season for them. Twyford with 1,290 units, Cromwell on 965 and Alexandra on 902, also have had average seasons. Renwick on 1,121 and Roxburgh on 778 have had below average accumulations. The Longlands site has had an exceptional season with 1,448 units. The net result is that summerfruit has generally tasted very good.

Apricots, as our earliest to move crop, suffered significant frost damage in spring, in Central Otago. Enough fruit was lost to alter the supply-demand equation to the extent that prices stayed relatively high through the entire selling season.

Rainfall

Rainfall, and more particularly the timing of the rain, can and did have a significant impact. Across the regions there have been significant wet months, e.g. in Bay View in November where 327% of the average for that month fell. Twyford had 539% of normal, Longlands had 486% and Renwick 202% in November which all impacted the cherry crops in these regions. Cromwell had 277%, Alexandra 376% and Roxburgh 359% in January, again timed for maximum impact on the cherry crop.

cherries LOW MED HIGH

➤ The season has finished.

apricots LOW MED HIGH

➤ Harvest has finished and there are only bits and pieces still to be found on supermarket shelves.

nectarines LOW MED HIGH

➤ The last August Red and August Fire are being packed now in Central Otago but supply will not fill all markets.
 ➤ Next week could well be the last fresh nectarines until the end of November.

peaches LOW MED HIGH

➤ Golden Tatura and Golden Queens are available and reported to be eating well. They are also reported to be the fruit causing the most issues at retail. Fruit in trays could be part of the answer next season.
 ➤ Peacharines are still in good supply and should be OK for the next 10 days.
 ➤ Plus Plus from Central Otago is all but finished.
 ➤ Beryl’s Delight will be available for two or three weeks.

plums LOW MED HIGH

➤ Royal Star from Hawke’s Bay, plus small volumes of Angelino, Sun Gold, Freedom and a little Omega are available from Central Otago.
 ➤ Malone may be available but not in any quantity for a couple of weeks.
 ➤ The plum market is now coming right in terms of volume and the number of available varieties.