



market update



20 December 2022

North Island

At the risk of sounding like the proverbial stuck record, please make the rain stop and bring out some sunshine. Puddles and mud are inflicting tough growing conditions on all crops. Maize that has not yet reached fencepost height, home garden berries rotting before ripening and melons struggling in standing water.

And yet it is difficult to find stonefruit in supermarkets with any disease at all. There are a few theories as to why this might be, but whatever the situation growers are doing a good job in trying circumstances.

Growing degree days, GDD, are still clearly back on previous seasons, less so further from the coast. There was another 40-50m of rain last week and evapotranspiration, ET, was in the range of 1-3 mm/day when 4's and 5's might be expected. Once we get Tuesday over and done with there is only showers predicted for the rest of the week.

The major North Island markets have less supply than they could sell on all the five stone fruit types, and I'm thinking this is similar for a good deal of fresh fruit.

South Island

Like Hawkes Bay, Marlborough is still grumping about weather, with rain covers over the cherries proving their worth. There is few days cherry harvest remaining here.

Central Otago has had a drier week than was anticipated and is now enjoying some good harvest conditions. The volume of cherries is building still, with strong market conditions. Unfortunately, logistics in some cases are not working well enough. The weather this coming week seems to be on a warming trend, still some cool evenings and only light occasional rain. Last week there was a day with an 8 mm/day ET, which is heaps, and generally moderate to high tree water use indicates that the growing season is well under way.

cherries LOW MED HIGH

- Hawkes Bay's last cherries, Rainier, Lapins and Modesto will be harvested this Tuesday and Wednesday. That's it until next season from this district.
- Marlborough is tidying up the last of the Stella and Sweetheart and should be out of the orchards until next year by Christmas.
- There are good volumes of fruit being harvested and the picking seems to be under control. Tidy market conditions are being experienced, with fruit that was dispatched Monday and Tuesday available for Christmas supply. Chelan and Fulfur will be ending now, with Sam, Summit and Santina available. Dawson is likely to be the next variety picked. The Auckland markets are saying that there is OK volume at this stage.

apricots LOW MED HIGH

- There is the last small volume of Sundrop for sale, Clutha Gold harvest has begun, again very limited supply and the Kyoto variety is about to be picked. Again, very light volumes. Only half of the supermarkets visited had any for sale.

nectarines LOW MED HIGH

- Nectarines are in good supply and eating well. The last of the Early Star has gone to market.
- Varieties available include Maylis, Ruby Giant, Honey Fire and the white fleshed Pearl that were picked last week. Add this week Spring Brite and Chrystal. Mid Star will be about a week away from being picked in early areas.

peaches LOW MED HIGH

- Rich Lady, Lady Red and Alba are in the market to compliment the Spring Lady, Coraline and Donut peaches. Generally, volumes of peaches are just about OK.
- Mellow Yellow, the first of the non-melting golden peaches will begin to be picked later this week.

plums LOW MED HIGH

- This week there is Black Diamond plums in the supermarkets.
- Purple Majesty harvest is under way.
- I have heard of some skim picks of Black Amber and Fortune, these maybe a result of lighter crop loads promoting early maturity.

Market update by Richard Mills, Technical Advisor, Summerfruit NZ, email richard.mills@summerfruitnz.co.nz

Note: The information supplied is based on communication with summerfruit growers, marketers, retailers and other relevant industry parties. Information supplied on cherries, apricots, nectarines, peaches and plums can alter after publishing due to unexpected weather events, market forces, and other events relevant to the industry. Seek daily advice on supply from your summerfruit supplier.