



market update



30 November 2020

North Island

The harvest season is now well underway with apricots, cherries, peaches and nectarines from the early varieties having been picked.

There was probably adequate winter chilling for all the Summerfruit species, although cherries may have benefited from a well-timed dormancy enhancer. Cherry crops are not quite at full crop status as flowering was during a wet weather period. Big fruit is on the cards. The other species are there or thereabouts and should in general have big fruit as well, as only a quick hand thin was required.

Growing degree days are excellent, apart from Bay View and Havelock North which are average.

November rainfall totals are slightly above or below average but the average temperature is 1.4 to 2.1°C warmer than the historic average, with most of the weather stations already recording 30°C or more – and its only November.

South Island

Very early cherry varieties are being picked and sold at the farm gate, and a few are filtering to the North Island.

There was plenty of chilling with no adverse frost, snow or hail events to date. Like Hawkes Bay, crop loads are mostly there but not always a heavy set. Cherry varieties that are a little light in one area and heavy in another, with peach and nectarines needing to be thinned but it was not a massive job.

The four Central Otago weather stations are between 0.2 and 0.4 °C warmer than the longer-term average, and the Renwick station is 1.2°C warmer.

Renwick cherry crops are lighter than ideal, this should lead to nice big fruit, and less worry in a tight labour market.

Some of the Central Otago locals have commented that the heat unit accumulation has the feel of the 2017 season where maturity raced and harvest timing was early. The Rockview and Clyde stations are moving towards that high total but not comparable at this stage. Rockview has accumulated 231 units compared with 259 in the 2017 year. Cromwell and Roxburgh East are at average for this time of the year. Main pick cherries will come in at the normal time of 12th-14th of December. For the week or 10 days leading up to that time we are anticipating drizzle and a rainfall event with daily potential evaporation, PET, in the 1.5 - 6 mm range. PET of 6 mm seems quite high for this time of the year.

cherries

LOW

MED

HIGH

➤ The early varieties from Hawkes Bay are now largely finished with Rosanne and Lapins harvest is about to begin. On warmer blocks Dawson, Sonnet and Samba will soon be starting. Central Otago early varieties such as Burlat are in the market and a few stores will have the Picnic variety. As the firmer fruit becomes available the supermarkets will have more complete offerings. Timing from all three districts seems normal.

apricots

LOW

MED

HIGH

➤ Royal Rosa and the other early season varieties being picked. We are perhaps three quarters of the way through this segment which started a bit earlier than might have been anticipated. The market has reported mixed quality, mostly scuffing. Hawkes Bay Sundrop will be a wee way off yet. Central Otago apricots look to have a full crop, so different from last season.

nectarines

LOW

MED

HIGH

➤ There is a mix of varieties available, both white and yellow. Polar Light and MayGlo are finishing now, Rose Diamond and Armredark will be next with the first Early Star mid to late next week. I have seen significant rots in fruit in a supermarket, probably from fruit that didn't go through a DC.

peaches

LOW

MED

HIGH

➤ Spring Fire is starting and the fruit that I have tried has eaten nicely. Volumes will build this and next week. There is a limited supply of Springcrest and Spring White, and we are anticipating Spring Lady and June Lady later next week. The supply of early season peach and nectarine will be smaller than past seasons due to trees being removed. Good fruit size is anticipated from the trees still in the ground.

plums

LOW

MED

HIGH

➤ Season long volumes will be lower this season with the removal of some blocks and hail damage on another. Harvest has not yet properly begun with a nibble of Black Diamond. Rose Zee and Red Beaut are due mid to late next week.

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.