

Compac sizes up US opportunities

The New Zealand-based firm is enjoying success in the US market and has recently opened an office in California to develop further prospects

NEW Zealand firm Compac Sorting Equipment Ltd has been busy carving out sizeable market share in the US technology market over the past few years. It supplies machinery to a number of fruit companies in the US, targeting firms in California, Washington State, New Mexico and the East Coast.

“We have developed new technology for the US market, which include sizer control features to offer increased automation and ease of use not yet seen in the market,” claims Compac’s Phil Prior. “We have also been working on blemish sorting features to suit US requirements and the country’s fruit varieties.”



Compac makes the grade in the US

Compac offers technology solutions for a number of fresh produce companies and works with apple and onion producers in Washington State, stonefruit and citrus firms in California, as well as tomato and pomegranate growers.

After many years of supplying the New Zealand and Australian apple industry with technology to keep their fruit competitive on the world market, Washington State offered some interesting challenges.

“The demanding Washington State apple packers have embraced the features and technology that Compac is able to offer to maximum benefit,” Mr Prior says.

The Washington Red Delicious apple is larger and a slightly different shape than its Southern Hemisphere counterpart and Compac has managed to accommodate the US by modifying its sizer design to cater for new requirements.

“Washington State is covered by our agent Van Doren Sales

and together we have installed many machines over the last three years for apples,” Mr Prior says. “Our longest machine consists of 12 lanes and is 285 ft long.”

This mammoth machinery has been installed at Pasco-based Broetje Orchards. The company has also supplied machinery to Hansen Fruit & Cold Storage and Larson Fruit, as well as Washington Fruit & Produce Co, Double Diamond Fruit and Stemilt Growers Inc.

Compac believes that its success in the US is partly due to the InVision 5000 Colour sorting system. “Due to the ease of use and outstanding accuracy of this system, we have also refitted our electronics onto many existing machines in Washington

State for apples,” Mr Prior says, adding that more than 40 per cent of the area’s crop is sorted using Compac technology.

Compac is also busy fine-tuning its InVision 9000 apple blemish system. The machinery has recently been installed at Larson Fruit Co and will make its appearance in other US apple facilities later this year.

In addition to making its mark in the apple arena, Compac also offers a number of electronic sorting solutions for onion producers in Washington State. “We are one of the few companies to offer high tech solutions to the onion industry to provide improved size, weight and shape accuracy,” Mr Prior claims.

California is another area Compac is targeting. The firm became active in the Golden State in 2000, when a vicious frost threatened the citrus

crop. One company that turned to Compac was Golden Valley Citrus and in six weeks, a Compac machine was delivered from New Zealand to California.

“That machine saved their crop and many others by accurately separating the frost damaged fruit,” Mr Prior explains. “It enabled us to demonstrate the accuracy and reliability of our technology and equipment and led to installations of our InVision 9000 blemish sorting systems and other technology to some of the largest packers in the US such as Paramount Citrus Association and Sun Pacific.”

Compac also works with Californian stonefruit producers and has introduced revolutionary software systems to improve pack line operations. Gerawan Farms is one producer that uses the latest generation Compac sizer control software machinery.

In order to further its US coverage, Compac opened a new sales and service office in Visalia, California in January. ★