

FRESH NOTES

A TECHNICAL UPDATE PUBLISHED BY HORTGRO SCIENCE



PACKHOUSE
ACTION GROUP

Fresh Notes feedback of a Packhouse Action Group (PAG) meeting held in August 2024

(Contact details are listed at the bottom of the Fresh Notes)

Packhouse Optimisation and Agro-processing Summit

Please see details of this event on 12 – 13 November 2024 in the link below.

[Packhouse Optimisation and Agro-processing Summit \(bizcommunity.com\)](https://bizcommunity.com)

Update on Logistics Chain Efficiencies

Contact: Jacques du Preez

While there were medium-term port initiatives, these were only incremental improvements. Additional RTG's and straddle carriers are planned. Given the state and availability of equipment, a tough season is expected. Exporters will have to consider alternative ports in Eastern Cape and Durban, as well as using reefer vessels.

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) work group Contact: Prof Wiehann Steyn / Jacques du Preez

N Baijnath-Pillay is the new ESB manager. She will liaise with government on plastic issues, be involved with environmental waste and resource management, be the industry interface with the UN Plastic treaty and liaise with the plastic sector.

Encourage plastic recyclers to become BRC accredited to supply the demand for food contact recycled plastic for packaging (*BRC accreditation is a **worldwide recognized food safety and quality certification***). It ensures food safety and guarantees effective improvements in the production, packing, storing and distribution processes. To obtain BRC certification, a food manufacturer must choose an accredited certification body to conduct the audit. The certification body will then review the manufacturer's documentation and conduct an

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on-site audit to assess compliance with the BRC standard. If the manufacturer meets the requirements of the standard, they will be awarded BRC certification.

Co-ordinate industry-wide response to pressure suppliers to meet market deadlines and specifications (see below from EU market) & specifications about colour coding of plastic strapping for export purposes.

Become conversant with UN Plastics Treaty due to be finalised and ratified by end of 2024.

The Council of the EU (Member States) and the European Parliament have reached agreement on new packaging rules that will increase the reuse and recycling of packaging materials that directly impacts our industry. This by far is the strictest requirements we are needing to comply with in the shorter term.

The new rules mean stricter sustainability requirements on all food packaging, that will also apply to non-EU suppliers of packaged food to the EU market.

- **All packaging must be recyclable.** Plastic packaging must contain minimum amounts of recycled plastic (at least 30%), packaging must be minimised, and contaminants must be reduced. Producers of recycled plastic in non-EU countries must produce it in a way that is equivalent to EU standards on collection of plastic and environmental emissions.
- There will be **new limits on concentrations of polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) in packaging.**
- Documentation demonstrating **compliance with new sustainability requirements** must be passed along the supply chain.
- There will be restrictions on the use of certain packaging materials, including a ban on single use plastic packaging for quantities of fresh fruit and vegetables <1.5 kg, and a requirement that all sticky labels attached to fruit and vegetables are compostable.

The final EU Regulation is expected in the second half of 2024. If so, the new rules will apply from early 2026. Recyclability and recycled plastic targets will apply from 2030.

Establish what PlasticsSA / other bodies and their members' interventions & readiness to facilitate / implement are for food plastic packaging materials.

Next Generation packaging systems for Hi – Cube containers Contact:

Prof Wiehann Steyn

A new project has been submitted to maximise space usage in a container.

Packhouse Benchmarking Project

Contact: Willem Coetzee / Hendrik Claassen /

Francois Malan

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Frudata has provided feedback to 9 packhouses with 21 packing lines. Participants felt that the feedback adds good value. Frudata is addressing the different standards and their interpretation in the packhouses, with the view of standardisation.

Packhouse Water and Energy Management Projects Contact: Dianca Yssel / Eddie Vienings

Blue North is planning a water metering campaign to explain to packhouses why metering is necessary, with the view of providing a best practice guideline.

Fire Protection Guideline for Packhouses and Cold Storage Facilities

Contact: Koos Bouwer

Please see link below for guidelines related to insurance requirements.

[Fire Protection Guideline for Packhouse and Fruit Cold Storage Facilities](#) [[Download](#)] [[View](#)]

CA Engineers Webinar Presentations

The following presentations are available on the PAG website:

Kingspan fire safe insulated panels presentation:

[Kingspan Fire Safe Panels Presentation](#) [[Download](#)] [[View](#)]

Dr Robert Prange's 'What is the correct carbon dioxide concentration?' presentation:

[Correct carbon dioxide concentration by Dr Robert Prange](#) [[Download](#)] [[View](#)]

There is also a YouTube recording of Dr Prange's presentation.

Market Access Feedback Contact: Jacques du Preez / Lindi Benic

Mexico

The programme was completed with 97 000 cartons. The rejection rate was 13%. Hortgro wishes to know if there is interest in exporting pears to Mexico. Despite an existing protocol, Mexico confirmed a risk analysis would first be required to assess phytosanitary measures required for pests on pears from SA. Mexico confirmed *Pseudococcus viburni* is a regulated pest in Mexico and detection during inspection would result in rejections. Mexico is analysing information regarding the fumigation option for apples to propose an amended workplan for DALRRD's consideration. An approved facility is required for fumigation.

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Taiwan

DALRRD had reported that there were irregularities regarding some packhouses during inspections. According to Hortgro, such practices were unacceptable, and would result in offending packhouses being suspended from the programme in future.

Mandatory online training will be provided in November (held biannually, as requested by DALRRD/Taiwan), and a training certificate must be uploaded onto PhytClean during registration. It is important to manage risk and producers with codling moth or red spider issues should not include fruit from infected orchards for export to Taiwan.

Thailand

Thai officials conducted inspections during March 2024. The provisional registration process is underway. Market access for apples is expected soon.

Philippines

The market access process is still work in progress. A pest categorisation process for apples and pears for export from South Africa to the Philippines is ongoing to confirm the draft pest lists for apples and pears. An on-site visit is anticipated as the next step, once the process is completed.

PAG Disciplines and Coordinators

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

Chairman – Koos Bouwer (bouweb@orangenet.co.za)

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Packhouse Large – Francois Malan (francois.malan@cfg.co.za) / **Willem Coetzee** (willem@dutoit.com) / **Hein Punt** (info@lanko.co.za)

Packhouse Small – Hendrik Claassen (hendrik@bellafrutta.co.za), **Thinus Loock** (thinus@jjloock.co.za)

Post-Harvest Quality – Dr Elke Crouch (elke@sun.ac.za), **Henk Griessel** (henkg@tru-cape.co.za), **Jaco Moelich** (jaco.moelich@fruitways.co.za)

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