

FRESH NOTES

A TECHNICAL UPDATE PUBLISHED BY HORTGRO SCIENCE



PACKHOUSE
ACTION GROUP

Fresh Notes feedback of a Packhouse Action Group (PAG) meeting held in November 2025

Contact details are listed at the bottom of the Fresh Notes.

Hortgro Website (Packhouse Action Group and Pome/Stone Protocols):

Contact Elise-Marie Steenkamp

DOWNLOADS (25 July– 21 October both pages)

• PAG Water Project Benchmark Result – Phase 5	1 188
• 'Quo Vadis' – Long-Term CA storage regimes of Cripps' Pink apples and fruit quality	1 114
• CA Manual revised	971
• Jaco Visagie – Trends in Container Technology and Supply	859
• PAG Water Project phase 4	713
• Fresh Noted 194 – PAG Feedback (March 3)	660
• Johan Strydom – Container Checklist	635

Update on Logistics Chain Efficiencies

Contact: Jacques du Preez

The first consignment of 9 Rubber Tyred Gantries (RTG's) has been commissioned. A second batch of 9 RTG's is expected by mid-November and a third batch of 10 will be assembled in January 2026. Productivity in terms of gross container moves per hour (GCH) has increased by 20% over the previous year. A meeting has been held to review Transnet operations and seasonal readiness.

Thailand Cold Steri Programme

Contact: Johan Strydom

Guidelines based on the Thailand and DoA bilateral agreements (14 pages and 11 pages respectively) have been compiled. The purpose was to extract the critical issues for growers, packhouses and exporters that are listed in the agreements, but easily missed. The official Thailand apple protocol document still needs to be followed.

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Carton / label marking requirements Contact: Bryce MacIntyre/Hendrik Claassen

The following issues were discussed:

PPECB requirements
Special market requirements / labels
Rejections for marking requirements
Label backing not recyclable
Technology / future of carton information

The Deciduous Co-ordinating meeting highlighted a significant number of rejections due to marking requirements. The official documents did not define all the details of the sticker size, colour and fonts. Visual examples of the stickers and clarity on positions/number of stickers were proposed.

It was reported that a lack of attention to detail was the cause of many marking requirement rejections. Marking requirements in the export standards and special markets protocol marking requirements should be strictly adhered to. DoA was requested to provide more specific information on marking requirement non-compliances.

Label backing is now recyclable regionally. Contact Bryce MacIntyre for specific details.

It was recommended new web-based technology applications such as QR codes to address marking requirements be implemented.

Best practice guidelines for orchard, packhouse and cold store sanitation

Contact: Dr Mariana Jooste

Anna Mouton has been commissioned by Hortgro to write a best practice guideline for packhouse sanitation.

She has the following questions to guide her in writing the report:

- What are the problems that the industry wants to address? (Why do they want to sanitise?)
- What are their expectations of the best-practice guidelines?
- Are they willing to be involved in the development? (To share information and also review the document.)
- Are they comfortable with the practices being documented and thus effectively becoming public?
- In what format would they prefer the 'Best Practice Guidelines'? Possibly a graphic/infographic-type document?

If you wish to contribute in any way, please contact Dr Jooste.

FRESH NOTES

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L Benic referred to her original report on guidelines for critical controls to reduce inoculum load throughout the orchard, packhouse and handling process, to reduce decay, based on her previous research. She highlighted the importance of reducing inoculum load on the fruit from the orchard, through effective drench management if used and effective cleaning and sanitation in packhouse/storage areas. It was suggested that all aspects to reduce inoculum load should be included.

Market Access Feedback

Contact: Jacques du Preez / Lindi Benic

Mexico: An invitation for the Mexican inspector has been sent to DoA. The timing must still be confirmed.

Taiwan: Taiwan will most likely send an inspector first before approving exports. This is expected next year.

Thailand: This market is up and running, though volumes are low.

Philippines: Philippine officials are expected by end February 2026 to complete an onsite verification visit to facilitate market access for apples and pears.

PAG Disciplines and Coordinators

Please get in touch with the relevant person below if you have any queries regarding the PAG.

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