

## Future Orchards “Business Development Group” (BDG) Update

April 2016

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### Dear Grower or Industry Personnel

Welcome to the 5th BDG update of the 2015/16 year. You are receiving this newsletter as an active contributor to Future Orchards™ program or the “APAL Crop Estimate Project”. Both projects are funded through your APAL levy and HIA.

This newsletter is a chance for us to highlight some of the key datasets that Orchardnet is able to provide the industry and to assist all users of Orchardnet, maximize its usefulness.

To make sure I was partially informed of the Australia landscape I asked a few of my contacts to give me an update of their season. Remember these are personal opinion’s so wont necessarily represent the district but it’s the best I could do quickly. These comments were as at 12/4/16.

### Regional roundup

#### Stanthorpe

- Gala all picked. Gala quality this year is very good with good fruit size due to a good spring and early summer rain.
- Reds are 90% picked. Colour and size good. Retain and NAA were both widely used on Reds.
- Grannies : Yield is back on last year but fruit size is larger. Harvest currently 50% through.
- Pinks Only light skim picks to date. Main harvest will start in 10-14 days. Heavy crops, but colour and size still have some way to go. Night temps cooling off now so here’s hoping for a good finish.

#### Orange

- Crop loads are down on last year which with a late dry summer has been a blessing in many instances.
- Late summer has been hot and dry requiring lots of irrigation water to keep the crop at optimum.
- Gala harvest is complete, Reds and Fuji virtually complete, Pinks will start in earnest 18/4/2016.
- Orange growers asking for some rain and some cool nights to finish the Pinks off in good condition.

#### Batlow

- Gala, Reds finished. Fuji almost finished and Pinks just starting.
- Yields down 10% on last year but Class 1 recovery is up by a similar percentage. Fruit size is a touch smaller than last year.

- Extensive use of hail net (both throw over and permanent) has significantly improved fruit quality thanks to the hail net incentives available.
- Weather over Jan/Feb was hot and dry resulting in smaller fruit size and some sunburn.

### Shepparton

- Just Pinks, Sundowner and a few Grannies still to pick.
- Pink quality looks good with hail damage less than expected.
- Size overall has been medium with Grannies larger than last year.

### Southern Vic

- Yield has been down for my one contact but fruit quality has been very good.
- Colour and size on Gala was excellent
- Granny Volumes also down but fruit size well up
- Pinks are just about to start with most other varieties either complete or very close to it.

### Tasmania

- Short quick season for many
- Pink lady now the main variety left to pick
- Quality has been good with optimum fruit size
- Dry harvest with very little time lost to rain

### Adelaide

- Just Pinks to go
- Gala harvest went well considering the heat
- Sunburn and bird damage levels about normal

### WA

- No report Im sorry

## FRUIT SIZE MONITORING

### Pink Lady

At as 12/4/2016 we are on average, 190 days after FB. The average fruit size at that date was 70 mm. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 below, the fruit growth rate, whilst good in the spring, has since slowed to now be sitting below both the 2014 and 2015 curves. In both these previous years the average Pink Lady fruit size was 176 gms. Therefore we would predict the average this year to be smaller than this, maybe down to 170 gms. Is this a sign that the crop loads are heavier or that the growing conditions less favourable?

Figure 1 National Average Pink Lady Fruit Size DAFB

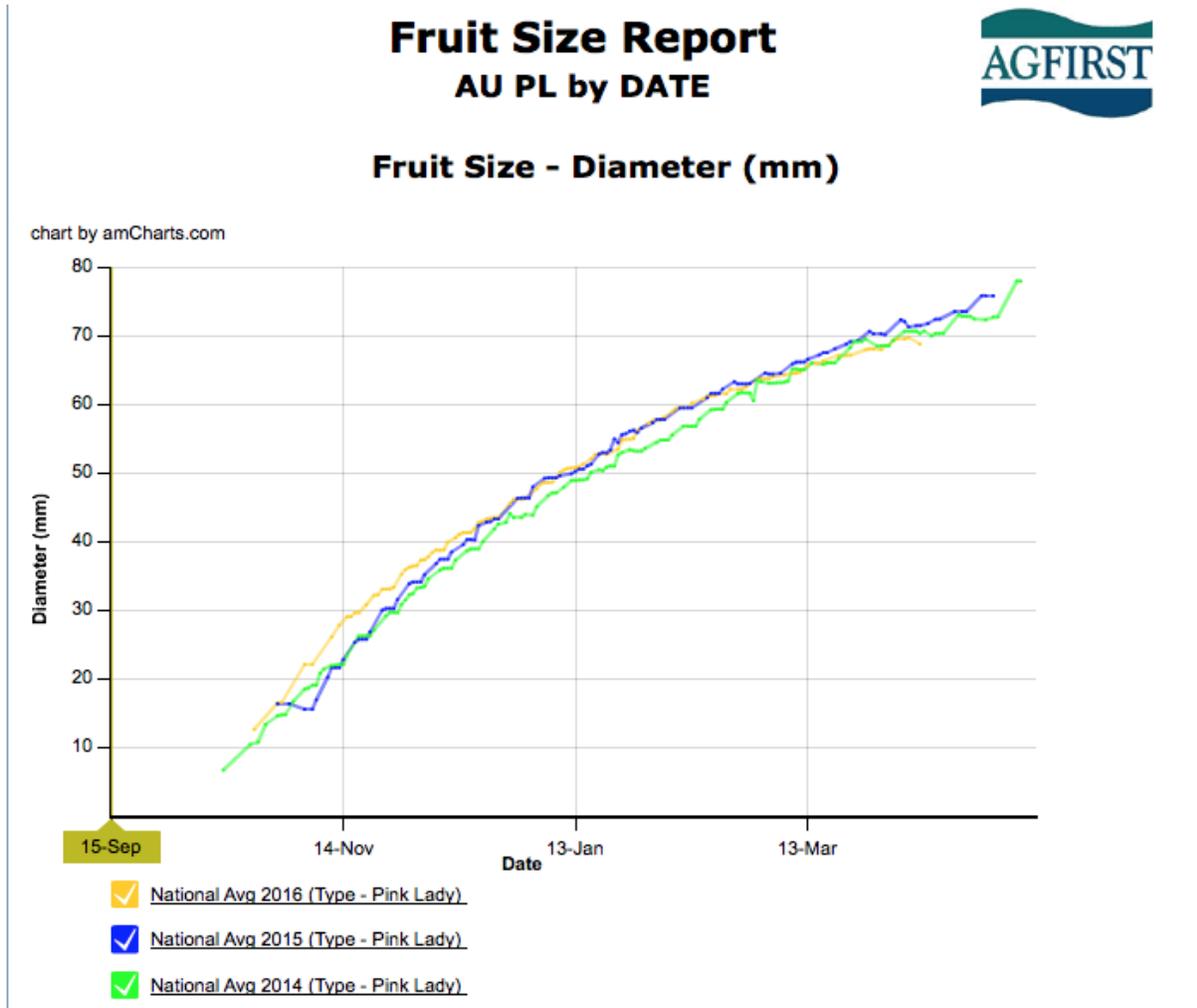


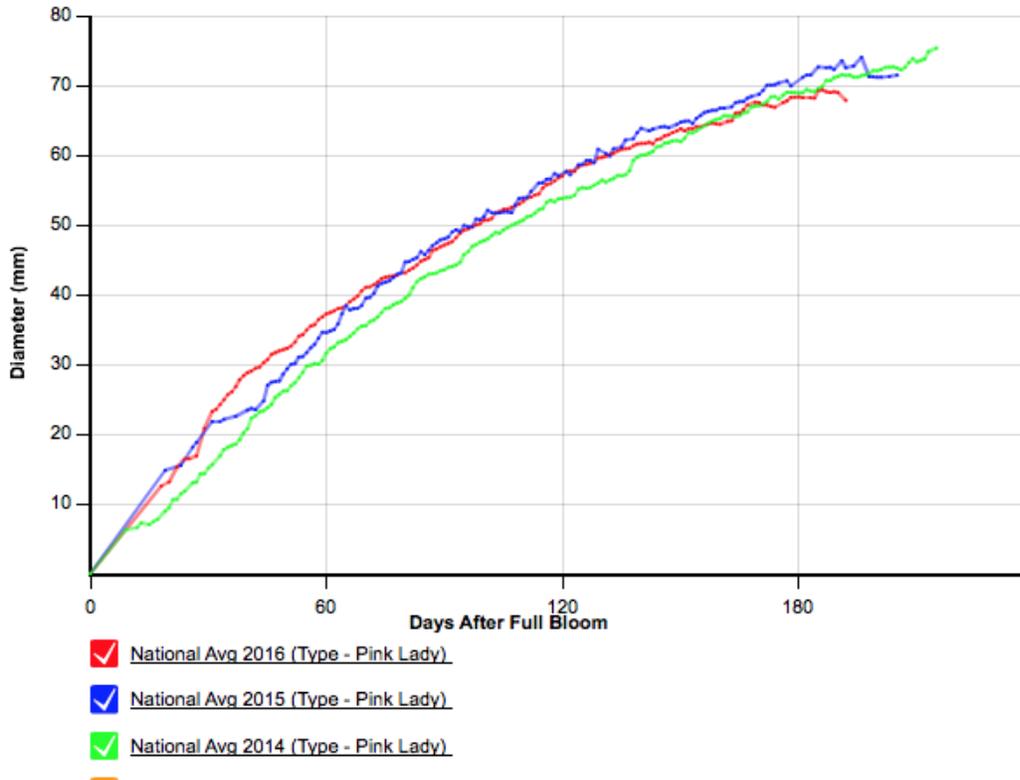
Figure 2 Pink Lady Fruit Size (DAFB)

# Fruit Size Report AU PL by DAFB



## Fruit Size - Diameter (mm)

chart by amCharts.com



## Fuji

The last Fuji fruit size measurement taken on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016 (177 DAFB) averaged 75 mm (Fig 3 & 4). We suspect that was just prior to harvest commencing. In 2016, Fuji fruit size tracked similar to 2015 and significantly larger than either 2013 or 2014. We therefore predict Fuji fruit size to average the same as 2015 = 195 gms.

Figure 3 Fuji National average by Date

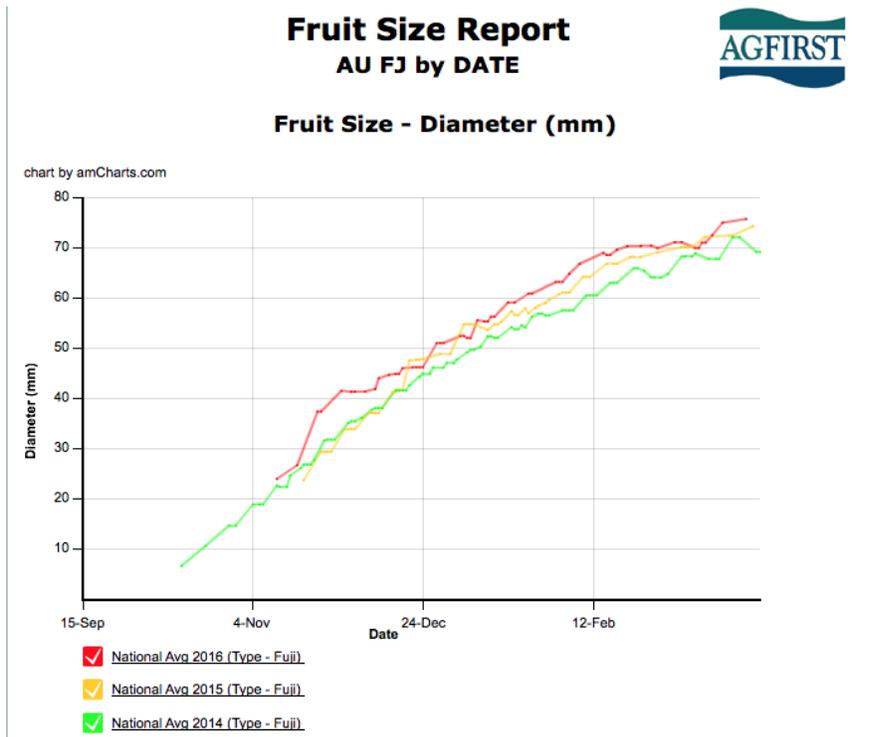
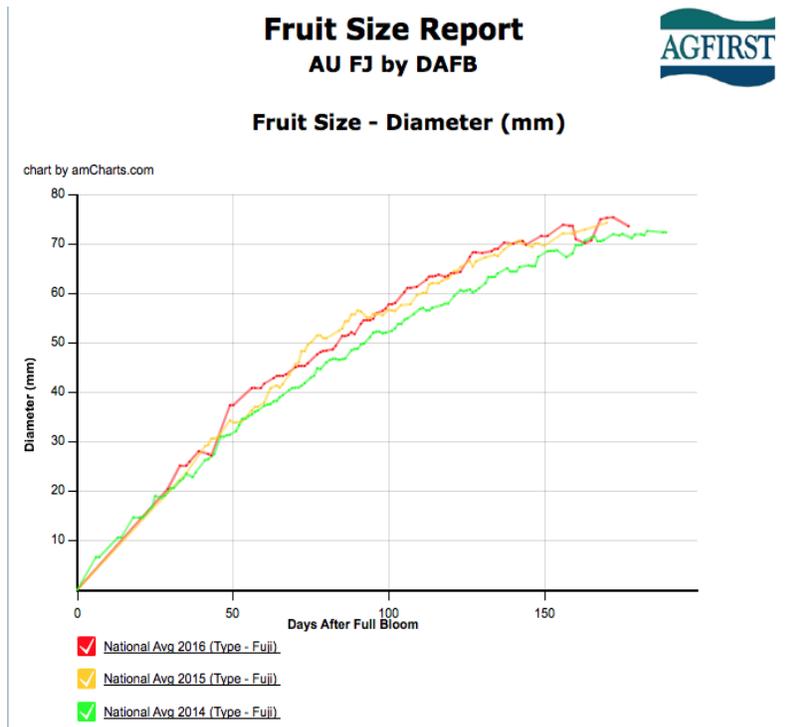


Figure 4 Fuji fruit Size DAFB



## Granny Smith

The final Granny Smith reading was taken on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016. This corresponds to 178 days after full bloom. The reading averaged 74mm. As Figs 5 & 6 show, the Granny Smith growth curve in 2016 is very similar to the 2015 year and significantly larger than the 2014 year. This correlates with the comments from both Stanthorpe and Shepparton that the Granny size is up. We therefore predict the average fruit size to be approx. 176 gms.

Figure 5 Granny Smith Fruit Size by date

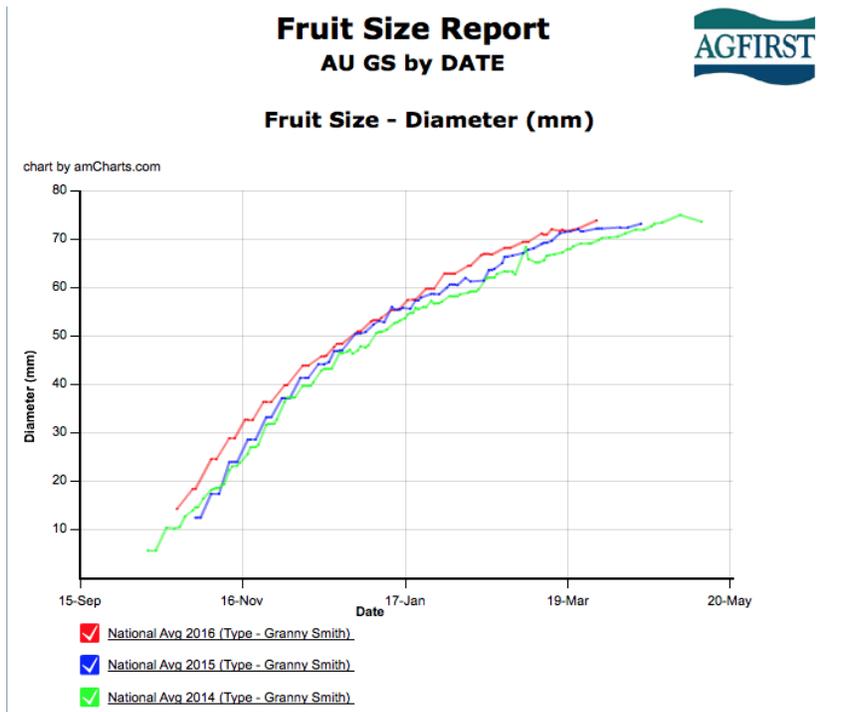
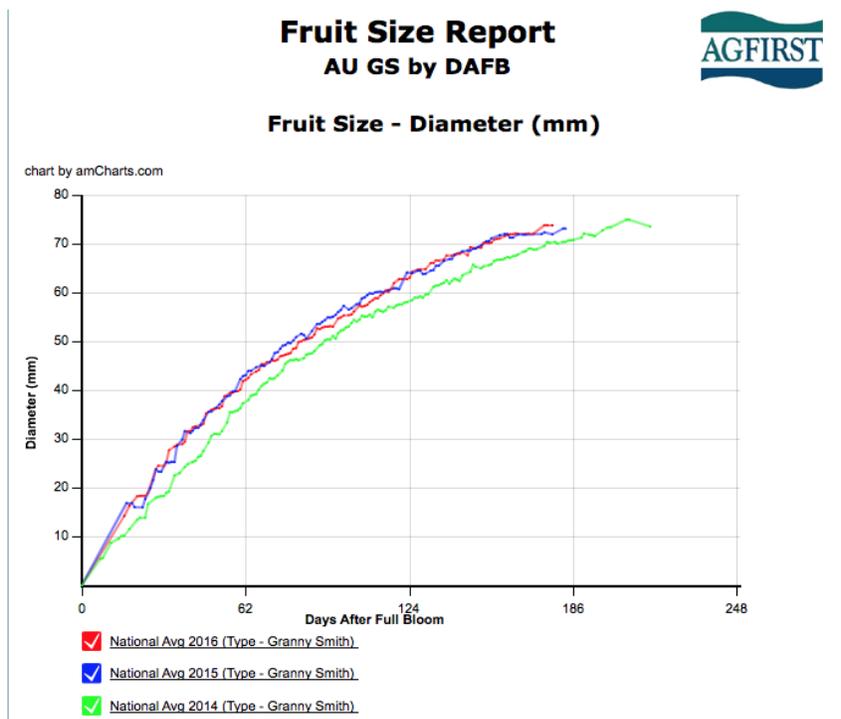


Figure 6 Granny Smith Fruit Size (DAFB)



## Maximizing the use of orchardnet over the next few months.

### Block production

Try and keep good records of the bins numbers coming off each block and enter these into orchardnet as soon as harvest is completed. When you do that can you also estimate the packout and fruit size. When the fruit is packed you can go back and update this data with actuals. The sooner you get your 2016 crop loaded, the sooner you can start planning for 2017.

### Block comments

Whilst the harvest is fresh in your mind, make notes of what worked in 2016 and what didn't. Record those in your 2016 comments section. Make notes for your 2017 crop of all the things you plan to improve the blocks performance. The name of the game is "continual improvement".

### Recording dates

The "Full Bloom" and the "first harvest date" are the most critical dates in the fruit growing calendar. Keep a good record of these and enter them into Orchardnet.

### Irrigation water use

Calculate the irrigation water you have applied to each block in "effective mm" (refer our Dec 2015 BDG newsletter) and enter so you can observe the crop factor you have used throughout the season and how you compare to other users and best practice of approx. 70-80% of ETo.

To be able to participate with any of the projects discussed or to get Orchardnet working for you, please either contact our OrchardNet administrator ([Adrian.stone@agfirst.co.nz](mailto:Adrian.stone@agfirst.co.nz)) or contact your local Front Line Advisor (details below).

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