Striving for Quality

BRAD FANKHAUSER – FANKHAUSER APPLES
Fankhauser Apples. About us

- Vertically integrated
- We grow, pack and market our own apples
- Based in Drouin, Victoria
- 33 Hectares planted, 28 Hectares netted
- 1500 tonnes per year

- Varieties included:
  - Granny Smith 5.5 Ha
  - Fuji 2.75 Ha
  - Gala 5 Ha
  - Golden Delicious 2 ha
  - Pink Lady 7.5 Ha
  - Jazz 7.5 Ha
  - Smitten® 3.25 Ha
  - Envy® 0.5 Ha
Why did I choose to be an apple grower?

- 130+ years of history
- 5th Generation apple grower
- Pride in delivering a superior product
- Passionate about the industry
- Positive about our future
What are my concerns

- Growers picking fruit which shouldn’t be picked
- Packers packing fruit that shouldn’t be packed
- Marketers selling fruit that shouldn’t be sold
- Stores stocking fruit that shouldn’t be displayed
- Consumers buy fruit that shouldn’t be eaten
New season disappointment
$6/kg? - Our consumers deserve better
What does the consumer think of apples overall?

- Lack of consistency is frustrating consumers that buy apples

- The industry needs to deliver a more dependable product

- Consumers are often quoted ‘Why cant I buy fruit like this from the supermarket?’
Quality Control Systems

- We stand by our apples
- We spend money to drive revenue
- Apples grown cheaply do not sell more apples
- We choose to spend to deliver premium fruit
- Quality Control for every 15 pickers and every 5 pruners
- We spend lots of time in the orchard assessing maturity, fruit and tree growth, water availability, pest and disease levels. Get your boots dirty!
- Our first Global Gap audit is due early in the new year
AgriTechnology
What can we do?

- Ultimately the grower delivering better fruit will do better than the one that does not.

- Sometimes its what you don’t do that makes the difference. Don’t over complicate things.

- **K.I.S.** Reliance on Seniphos and Regalis are not a solution for poor pruning techniques.
Recognise mistakes
Harvest - don’t be afraid to walk away
Orchard Systems

- Do what is best at the time you are doing it

- Have a plan, and ensure that everyone involved understands.

- Quality comes from attention to detail

- We plant orchard systems with an eye on the future

- Most orchard systems are successful if they are executed correctly
Platform

Will one fit down your rows, will it be efficient?
Sprayer

New systems require new machinery to get the best out of them
Overhead cooling / frost control
New Varieties

Not just 3 ‘P’ anymore
Price
Packout
Performance
Plan – Does the new variety fit into the farm?
Plan – Is there an exit strategy?
Plan – Does the new variety have a marketing plan?
Netting

Netting designed to allow over row sprayer and 10 metre wide headlands for turning with speed

Breaks in long rows to allow access for picking up fruit during harvest
Block examples

Smitten being planted December 2016

Jazz 21/9/18
Pollination

Which variety or crab apples?

Manchurian Crabs begin late September and flower for around 3-4 weeks.

Will they work with dormancy breakers?
Chemical Thinning

Have a thinning plan.

Does the variety need to be thinned early for maximum size or does it need to be thinned late to keep the size down?

Is there a high chance of bi-annual bearing?

Keep it simple, and do what works for you.
Field Climate
Field scouting/IPM

Needs to be consistent in both timing and reporting

Should also be independent offering unbiased recommendations

We employ a third party on a weekly basis to check traps and monitor blocks throughout the orchard.
A large share of supermarket shelf space
Or is this simply too many varieties for a retailer to handle?
Managing Varieties

Is it time to better manage varieties we already have?
Summary

- We take pride in our produce
- Continual improvement to Quality Systems
- Try new varieties and systems
- The blinkers are off!
Thank you for your attention