

NOVEMBER 2011 FUTURE ORCHARDS WALK

Robert Green Presenter Notes

Prepared by Robert Green

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Orchard Characteristics: 15 ha apple orchard located at Lenswood, Adelaide Hills, South Australia. Plantings of Gala, Pink Lady, Fuji, Sundowner. Average tree density of 2300 trees/ha. Orchard has been grown using drip irrigation/fertigation since 1986. Oldest planting 17 years of age.

Up to 1995 new blocks on the property were planted at the standard 4.5m x 2m spacing using 106 rootstocks but one .6 ha block of Gala and Fuji planted in 1989 on M26 was proving to be thought provoking.

Between then and now 70% of the orchard has been renewed with trees on M9 or M26 at a spacing of 3.5m x 1m (2857 trees/ha). Much of this also has or has provision for netting.

Planting the best genetic material on efficient rootstocks and having a good production system has seen yields, packout and importantly returns increase over this period.

Being a director at Lenswood Co-op has provided opportunities to travel to Europe, New Zealand and most regions locally. Other production areas of the world have different constraints or pressures applied to farmers and understanding how or why they have dealt with their challenges helps us solve similar problems 10 years later.

Being a member of Lenswood Co-op has enabled me to specialize in growing apples and utilize someone else who is a specialist in the field of marketing or packing or storage.

Recent consolidation amongst packers in Lenswood has seen some members benefit from a better scale of economy with regard to packing, marketing, freight, promotion, advisory services and for others not having to financing the capital cost of duplication. With after harvest costs representing such a large piece of the cost "pie" it warrants close scrutiny as small gains in efficiency can equal large gains in dollars.

