

## Media Brief

### SuperPak

#### A new era for avocado packing and marketing in Australia

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#### SuperPak profile

SuperPak was formed in 2007 from a network of avocado growers in the Wide Bay Burnett region of Queensland in response to an industry led study that proved the need for an improvement in the packing and marketing sector of avocado production.

#### SuperPak statistics

- Employs a core of 12 people for most of the year.
- Workforce expands to around 30-35 people during peak growing season.
- Comprises several larger growers and over a dozen small to medium sized growers.
- Expected to handle 500 000 trays of avocados in its first year of operation.
- Also handles other fruit lines such as stonefruit and limes.
- Facility cost \$2.2 million to establish.
- Shed space is 2000 square metres.
- Catchment area extends up to 350 kilometre radius.
- Cost savings to growers estimated at 25-40%.

#### Project partners

SuperPak acknowledges and thanks its investment partners:

- Sunfresh Marketing Cooperative
- Jim and Lois Carney – Avocado Ridge
- Don and Wendy Reynolds – Goodlife Orchard

#### SuperPak facility overview

This ambitious project aims to be one of the major avocado suppliers in Australia. Its objective is to provide the most efficient, and therefore cost effective, total packing and marketing solution for growers in its catchment area.

SuperPak is equipped with:

- Four lane packing line.
- More than 100 automatic tray filling drops.
- Automated labelling system for fruit stickers.
- Automated tray kick-off system for palletizing.
- First run packing for seconds.
- Computerised tracking, reporting and payment system.

### **The SuperPak system**

The shed is equipped with two dual lane sorters with more than 100 auto tray fill outlets where the fruit is aligned by packers and labelled with a bar code.

After trays are filled they are flicked forward onto a belt system that feeds into an automatic carton conveying system controlled by electronic eyes to distribute and sort the cartons into lanes for automated labelling of the premium and first grade fruit.

The system eliminates much of the handling that takes place most other commercial or private packing sheds and reduces labour costs by 30 to 50%.

### **Benefits to growers**

- Substantially reduced labour costs.
- Deep discounts from bulk pricing of packing materials.
- Discounted freight from farm to market.
- Higher returns from professional marketing by grower owned cooperative Sunfresh Marketing.

### **Avocado supply and demand**

Avocado production in Australia increased by around 10 per cent last season to approximately 44 000 tonnes and is predicted to continue to increase by 10 to 15% per year for a few more years. Much of this growth can be attributed to new plantings coming into production.

The Wide Bay Burnett region produces around 60% of the avocado crop in Queensland.

The Australian avocado industry experiences an abundance of fruit on the market between May and September each year. This can lead to a significant decrease in the price of avocados and results in the grower not realising a reasonable return and at times not recovering production costs.

### **Benefits to the Australian avocado industry**

The SuperPak total solution is expected to benefit the avocado industry primarily by:

- Providing low cost quality packing increasing grower bottom line.
- Professionally organising bulk supply of fruit for the domestic and export market.
- Providing a modern and efficient facility to handle fruit and increase returns to growers.
- Setting a benchmark for efficiency in packing and marketing.
- Able to provide the retailers and wholesalers a consistent supply line of fruit.
- Providing the buyers with fruit for most of the year means they support SuperPak.

- Able to invest in infrastructure, research, and promotion with a long-term outlook instead of restrained by capital or organisational structure.
- SuperPak is owned and run by growers.

### **The future**

- SuperPak expects to continue its partnership with Sunfresh Marketing Cooperative to explore and develop export opportunities in Europe and Asia.
- Develop pre-packaging and 'ripe and ready' solutions for retailers to meet consumer expectations.
- Expansion of the avocado value added product lines and utilisation of more of the total crop.
- Expansion into other product lines compatible with packing equipment for maximum equipment utilisation.

### **Further information and contacts**

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