



NZKGI Taste and Maturity Testing Strawman - 30 June 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to outline for how NZKGI proposes the sampling and maturity testing occurs for 2021 with some questions and areas to explore further in working groups. It is noted that this will need to be passed through NZKGI forum and other growers for feedback but it is the view of NZKGI IAC sub committee members keeping in mind the grower feedback survey.

It has been agreed that the Taste programme, including payment for high tasting fruit and a MTS is required to allow for the markets to receive the best possible fruit and return to New Zealand kiwifruit growers. For 2021 dry matter will also be the measure of taste. Kiwistart is also important for the industry so incentivising early harvest must also be incorporated into our thinking.

Issues to be resolved

Issues that need to be addressed in the way we sample, test and pay for Taste in 2021 and beyond are below

- Repeat testing
- Sub-optimal inventory
- Sample variability
- Minimising sampling peaks
- Labour availability

Packhouse sampling

NZKGI sub-committee members have considered the Seeka and Zespri proposals incorporating packhouse sampling in one shape or form for 2021.

The members believe that sampling in the packhouse has its merits and has potential for the future. Robust trials including comparing on orchard results, working through unintended consequences and issues, likely over several seasons, need to be completed before it can be confidently implemented industry wide.

Growers will need confidence that it is a fair and accurate method of testing with proven data and methodology and understand what the implications are for them.

2021 sampling

For the reasons above the NZKGI sub-committee members believe that on orchard sampling must be implemented for 2021.

This would be a simplified form of the status quo with details being worked through by a working group focused on sampling.

Some ideas to take to the working group include:

- The sampling must be independent or industry owned if not enough interest from independent contractors
- Explore the potential for alternative options for samplers - smaller “pods” of samplers in specific growing areas responsible for sampling local orchards, post-harvest could be responsible for supplying share of sampling labour to industry owned sampling hub
- To minimise sampling peaks and testing lottery post-harvest could be allocated their share (whether share of previous season kiwistart volume or supplier share) of samples and would require prioritisation of growers based on their own monitoring.
- Would like to explore ideas on improved sampling accuracy - larger sample sizes, reviewing maturity area sizes, the requirement for the 60 fruit sample

How the sampling works, especially during kiwistart may impact on how kiwistart is procured so should be reviewed with consideration to this.

2021 Lab services

- Lab testing of blind samples could be performed by independent contractors or registered post harvest labs.
- This will require significant coordination and logistics which will be a requirement of the Zespri system being built.
- The working group focussing on Lab Services should also review what characteristics are required for testing, linked to whether any payments are associated with those and whether some results have already been met in previous tests.
- All data must flow through the Zespri system and available to growers

Taste

NZKGI sub-committee members agree with the questions for consideration regarding Taste and encourage a working group focussed on working through the Taste programme to review the options for capping taste at a certain level, incorporating a maturity metric (such as brix or firmness) and the graduation of Taste payments as well as MTS.

Because the NZKGI sub-committee members don't support Post Harvest testing for 2021 the questions around Taste and MTS based on packhouse testing can be worked through with the view to future seasons and as part of the trials.

Grower engagement

Growers have significant interest in the Taste and maturity testing review. NZKGI is in the process of setting up a webpage on the NZKGI website for communication to growers.

Growers need to be taken on the journey and be provided the opportunity to provide feedback through multiple channels. With the potential introduction of packhouse testing in the future the messaging needs to be managed to explain the benefits, unintended consequences and implications for each grower.