



bravo™ news!

Friday 2nd March, 2018

What a season! Our lives in horticulture continue to be full of hope, expectation, amazing produce and success. It is always mixed with failure and things we wish we'd done differently and a list of learnings. It doesn't matter what part of the supply chain you're in, this is a shared experience.

One thing we learned is to talk more (and for our gentlemen readers, I would like today noted as the day you complained a female didn't talk enough!). So, in a concerted effort to talk and communicate more, please enjoy reading the first of your fortnightly Bravo™ News editions. As always, we welcome your feedback and are very happy to include issues that you think need highlighting.

One of the things I was unsure about was the level of information that we share. As an ANABP01 Grower you have every right to detailed information about how the program is progressing. What often happens though is that once on paper (or email) this information inevitably ends up in the hands of competitors, or worse, people who are actively and negatively looking to cause harm to the program. Discussing with an ANABP01 Grower, he said "well Jenny, you'll just have to be bigger than that", which is probably a fair reflection.

I hope you have either met or talked with Colin Griffin since he started his full time role as Bravo™ Apple National Development Manager. Colin has a wealth of experience in pome fruit management and marketing and I'm sure you will find him an asset to the program. His number is 0499 146 646 and his email is colin.griffin@wafarmdirect.com.au please feel free to call or drop him a note.

Colin has prepared the following report for you and I hope you enjoy the read and engage with him.

Regards - **Jenny Mercer**

Progress payments and final distribution to growers – With encouragement from the Fruit West board we introduced progress payments on harvested ANABP 01 fruit, making two advance payments on bins of fruit placed into store at harvest time. We believe this was a first for the apple industry. We are in the process of improving this payment system and aim to provide certainty around when growers can expect advance payments and the final pool distribution. More information will follow.

Bravo™ price returns –The price bar was tested as to the upper limit of 2017 returns on BRAVO™ in very challenging market conditions. We were able to keep the wholesale price at the 2016 premium level for most of 2017, in line with the marketing strategy and promotion of BRAVO™ as being worth every bit of the price, pitching against berries, avocados, mangoes and even a cup of coffee and a muffin. We were also getting encouraging consumer feedback that growers deserved to get a fair return. In a season where returns from other apple varieties have been disappointing, the price returned to growers of Bravo™ was encouraging, we do understand that this experience was highly dependent on your pack-out. At the close of the 2017 season, just shy of 20 000 cartons of Bravo™ were marketed. The current estimate for 2018 is some 2.7 times larger.

2017 Season harvest and pack out – The 2017 season was the 2nd commercial harvest with trees still in their very early stage of maturation. Growers were and continue to learn about best growing and picking practices. As such we had a real potpourri going through pack houses, who were also needing to learn how to deal with the apple we regularly refer to as *being Like No Other™*.

Pack-out of BRAVO™ branded apples was a disappointment to many, varying wildly with the

average being around 44.5%. The major contributing factors to low pack outs were:

- Difficulty interpreting the colour specification (naked eye and computers)
- Milky surface coatings on harvested fruit
- Non-conformance/difficulty in packers interpretation of specifications
- Bins of highly variable fruit quality being sent for packing.

These four issues have been the focus of considerable investigation and we believe a much improved outcome will be achieved in each area during 2018.

Storage of fruit – The longer than intended 2017 marketing period threw up its own challenges. Everyone is learning from every harvest. Importantly we can and are using the experience gained each year to improve performance in following years. We will still need to manage the flow of fruit to market. The pooling approach to price smoothing benefits everyone. We are conscious of the need to assist growers in their understanding of how certain decisions are made and how they benefit individually from the way BRAVO™ is marketed. We will be working with the Board of Fruit West on this particular matter.

ANABP 01 fruit outside BRAVO™ specs - Finding a home for ANABP 01 fruit not meeting the Bravo™ specification is an ongoing challenge. Many avenues are being explored. As one door shuts, we look for others to open. We are working on the first and most obvious solution - to maximising your Bravo™ pack out without compromising the quality specifications.

Market positioning – Based on the health benefits of eating BRAVO™ apples and the striking appearance of a new apple that is *Like No Other™*, we positioned BRAVO™ at the top-end of the fresh food market with success. The BRAVO™ branded apple is still *Like No Other™* and we believe consumers will continue to reward growers through a premium price, but not at the levels achieved during 2017. The domestic market was

awash with cheap apples and everyone was under pressure to maintain consumer interest in BRAVO™ in the face of budget lines on retail shelves. The aim for 2018 is to shorten the Bravo™ marketing period by narrowing the domestic price premium and getting export ready so we can grow demand rather than cannibalise the domestic apple market.

Export readiness – Small volumes of BRAVO™ were successfully exported to Singapore to test market acceptance and price. This has sparked interest from the trade with several importers enquiring about 2018 season fruit. BRAVO™ branded apples were also on display at a major trade fair in Hong Kong attended by buyers from around the world. Global interest in BRAVO™ is building and being export ready is something every grower needs to address.

Retail offering – Faced with considerable variation in fruit size from still very young trees, market research has identified opportunities to present BRAVO™ branded apples in more targeted ways. We are therefore looking to pack and present fruit in ways that cover the entire size spectrum of the BRAVO™ apple. We hope to have more to report on this initiative in future newsletters.

We do in deed live in challenging times. We share your concerns for the future and give you our commitment that we are working for you, the grower, in everything we do.

Please feel to raise with me anything to do with ANABP 01/BRAVO™. If I can help, I certainly will. WA Farm Direct is working very closely with the Fruit West Co-operative who are also doing some very hard yards on your behalf. Together, with you as a grower, we will certainly achieve more by pulling in the same direction.

Best wishes with your ANABP 01 trees.

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