

# **New Zealand Study Tour for Goulburn Valley Young Growers**

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Fruit Growers Victoria Ltd

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**HAL PROJECT NO. AP10700**

**FINAL REPORT**

**NEW ZEALAND STUDY TOUR FOR GOULBURN VALLEY YOUNG GROWERS**

**(POMEFRUIT)**

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**FRUIT GROWERS VICTORIA LTD.**



**PARTICIPANTS (clockwise):**

Colin Darlow, Bo Silverstien, Jason Shields, Steve Spark(Agfirst), Daniel Young, Bhavesh Donga, Angelo Emmi, Robert Loverso, Angelo Sciacca, Tony Loverso. Michael Crisera.

## Media summary

The Goulburn Valley young growers group regularly meet as a group prior, during and post fruit growing seasons to crossover information, have a meal and a few drinks and to also discuss and plan their next trip to see what the group can learn from other growing regions. Previous trips have involved visiting orchards in Southern Victoria, Adelaide Hills of South Australia and previous trips to the U.S.

Many of the previous study visits have been to areas where more high density plantings of apples have been observed. The group consists of a mixture of apple and pear growers for the Goulburn Valley and the difficulty when planning a trip to visit other growing areas is choosing orchards and fruit growing areas that a variety of local growers can benefit from what they see and hear from other orchardists.

After meeting prior to the beginning of the growing season the young growers decided to have our next study tour to the Nelson growing area in New Zealand. The area is known for having a lot of orchards under the age of 10 years of both apples and pears and a local pomefruit industry geared to export.

## Expected outcomes and how they were achieved

Some of the expected outcomes were to help local growers with their decision making in regard to planting new blocks and ideas as to set up their plantings and possible trellis systems. Another expected outcome was to view the plantings of differing dwarfing rootstocks that have been planted in the Nelson area of New Zealand.

Also being able to view both young and older planting systems that are designed to maximise production tonnes per hectare of orchard is important in assisting growers to remain profitable. The study tour has had an effect on growers in that they are now planning to plant with lower vigour rootstocks (M9, M26, Bud9, Geneva) at higher density to maximise production.





## Results of discussions

In a December meeting and review of the trip held in November growers got a lot out of seeing firsthand the plantings of young apples and pears and how quickly orchardists can get young plantings into production.

Gary Hall had demonstrated this on his very well maintained orchard with a young pear planting of Angelys' (russet) pear for the domestic and export market. The trellis system assists in training limbs to maximise light and fruit set. The plantings were immaculately maintained and trained perfectly to achieve 50 tonne per hectare in their 2<sup>nd</sup> leaf. (2 year old planting).

The New Zealand pome fruit (pip fruit) industry also has a more varied range of dwarfing rootstocks that growers can choose when planting new pear orchards in comparison to Australia.



A system that can bear fruit early can be critical when growers have spent a lot on capital and wages to initially set up an orchard. Every aspect of planting has to be completed with minimal errors to prevent long term losses or long delays on capital return.

Hoddies orchard near the Richmond area was one of the more impressive orchards with well maintained 2 dimensional and super spindle apple plantings which helped growers compare the 2 planting systems.



## **Implications for Australian horticulture**

The implications for Australian horticulture from the study tour are local Goulburn Valley young growers returning with increased knowledge when planting with lower vigour rootstocks and setting up trellis systems that help with training limbs to angles that maintain crop and decrease vigour.

Also some implications in regard to the knowledge that growers in New Zealand have passed on to Australian orchardists as to the risks with exporting and club varieties. Some export programs where extensive plantings of varieties suitable for the U.S. market (Jazz™) and French market (Tentation™) have not been as profitable as thought with many plantings that are 2 to 8 year old being changed over to different varieties. The costs associated with club varieties and then the mismanagement of export programs have cost local growers a lot in returns.

## **How the information gathered will be disseminated**

This final report to industry will be available on Fruit Growers Victoria website and an article will be published in Fruit Growers Victoria weekly newsletter Core Facts.

The Goulburn Valley young growers meet 3 times per year in spring, Christmas and after harvest. Growers who did not participate in the trip will have the opportunity to view the photos from the trip and discuss the outcomes with growers who were on the trip.

## **Itinerary**

### Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2011

Depart Melbourne, Australia - Arrive Nelson, New Zealand

### Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2011

#### 8.00am

Met with Craig Hornblow from Agfirst consultants and visited the following orchards:

Hoddies, Waimea, Vailima.

#### 12noon

Met with Steve Sparks from Agfirst consultants and visited the following orchards:

Braeburn orchards and Dobbie.

### Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2011

Met with Steve Sparks and visited the following orchards:

Birdhurst, Drummond and Inglis horticulture.

### Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2011

Depart Nelson – Arrive Melbourne

## Recommendations

The key learning's or recommendations to come out of the study tour are the following:

- Many new plantings are trial and error and the key is to trial.
- Growers normally get there new plantings right after 3 years of planting.
- Tree spacing's should be determined by dwarfing rootstock.
- Row spacing's should be determined tree height.
- Trees can grafted to another variety while maintaining original production.



## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Craig Hornblow and Steve Spark from Agfirst consultants for their assistance and taking the group to the orchards that we asked to see. I would like to also thank the local Nelson growers for giving up their time to show the group around their orchards and sharing their knowledge with the group.

Within the Study Tour group I would also like to acknowledge Bo Silverstien and his assistance within the group.





M9 PLANTING SPACE COMPARISONS, NOTE TCA DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BOTH. THE CLOSER PLANTED SECTION OF THE ROW ACTUALLY HAD LESS VIGOUR THAN THE WIDER SPACING.



(left) PEARS AT HODDIES. TABLETOP SYSTEM TO ALLOW MORE LIGHT AND INCREASE PRODUCTION ON THE BOTTOM TIERS OF THE TREES.

(right) GRAFTING OVER BRAEBURN TO ENVY™ WHILE MAINTAINING BRAEBURN PRODUCTION.