

For immediate release.
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Compac Sorting Equipment Seeks a Blemish-free Record with Top Citrus Packer

William Thompson is a straight talker and knows what he wants and how to get it. Raised on a New South Wales cattle farm, this former navy clearance diver now has his feet firmly planted on dry land as Operations Manager of Central Fruit Packers in Mundubbera, Queensland.

He runs a big operation, handling 25 percent of locally produced citrus as well as stone fruit, mangoes and grapes – and the team is gearing for further expansion.

A joint venture with four local growing families, a public company and produce marketer, Favco, Central Fruit Packers is working hard to build its reputation and track record as packhouse of choice for growers.

“We always remember that we have to earn our stripes and we’re only as good as our last season,” says William. “We want to run the most efficient operation possible by having the right equipment, processes and shed configuration so we can lower operating costs, accelerate throughput and continue to attract more growers because we offer the best deal.”

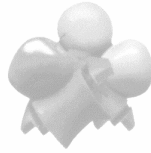
Investing in a state of the art blemish sorter that could deal with the characteristics unique to citrus was one of the priorities to achieve optimum efficiencies.

“We identified four companies that we thought could do the job,” he said. “One dropped out almost immediately, unable to deal with our throughput; another came in with an astronomical price; and two stayed the course – one local and the other, Compac Sorting Equipment from New Zealand from whom we had previously purchased a multi lane grader.”

Blemish sorting equipment did not enjoy a strong reputation for reliability in Australia and William was sceptical of the claims being made about how the operational and financial benefits he required from committing to such a significant investment would be realised.

“The local company tried to make out that their machine was perfect, but I knew that they were experiencing problems and at that point couldn’t even handle grading oranges sufficiently well - and they’re meant to be the easy citrus. I was also wary of the software and hardware modifications as no firm price or timeframe was being given.

“Compac, on the other hand, was completely open about the fact that software would have to be modified and our grader would have to be retrofitted and upgraded. They brought a small machine over and set it up in the packhouse and also put me in touch



with customers in the United States and South Australia so I could talk directly with them about how their systems performed.

“The clincher was when I talked to my mates in Griffith who do a range of fruit and they told me the Compac blemish sorter could do mandarins, which are really tricky. There were and still are some technical issues, but Compac Sorting has their own development, design and technical team on hand which really impressed me and is one of the key reasons I went for the Compac InVision 9000 Blemish Sorting System.”

Central Fruit Packers installed an eight lane pre-grader with the latest V10 control software to distribute the fruit into the packing system and the benefits are already evident in season one.

The shed now has 28 staff on the lines, 11 fewer than 2003, achieving an immediate cost saving in labour of approximately 30 percent in the first season.

Throughput has accelerated to an average of 35 bins (400 kg) of citrus per hour compared with the previous record of 28 bins per hour.

Even with an abridged citrus packing season due to shed reconfiguration work and equipment installation, throughput rocketed 250 percent for the packhouse’s April-September 2004 season to 39,000 bins versus 16,000 bins in the March-September 2003 season.

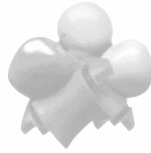
“Grading consistency has been excellent, with blemish sorting about as good as a human eye, “ says William. “But we’re working with Compac on some new prototype software to get even better efficiencies.”

Best of all for William has been the packhouse winning new business.

“I got extra growers this year because they knew we could guarantee quality with our new equipment and at the same time cut their processing costs. It’s a real selling point,” he said. “Originally we charged growers \$104 per bin to process their citrus. This season we charged \$85 per bin and the shed is still making money.”

William has high expectations of the level of service and support he demands from his supplier.

“I’m quite open about my wants because this is not a game but my livelihood,” he said. “If I didn’t hear from Compac Sorting Equipment in a month I would be pretty upset. If I have a problem like a breakdown, I need immediate attention and back up by technicians who know their way around a packing shed, not rocket scientists who talk in ones and zeros. And I need to be kept up to speed with new developments and upgrades so that I continue to improve the efficiency of my shed and what I can offer growers.”



Compac Sorting Equipment has responded positively to their customers' needs with an Australian market manager and two technicians on the ground to provide service and support.

"We work very closely with our customers to ensure that we understand their business and specific needs," said market manager, Pari Padrevita. "We compete on our ability to provide demonstrably reliable, user friendly equipment specifically designed for the fruit industry and tailored to an individual customer's unique needs. We were able to retrofit new card and camera software on to an existing Central Fruit Packers machine, for instance, to increase its performance accuracy and flexibility. We're prepared to go all out to deliver the best value to our customers and to work very hard in ensuring they stay with us as our new generation of software comes on line."

Product Specifications:

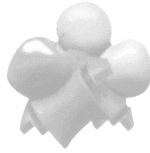
InVision 9000 Blemish Sorting

A key component of Compac's solution for produce sorting is the advanced InVision 9000 blemish sorting system. Cameras and advanced software combine to sort produce based on the presence of blemishes on the produce surface. The quality and consistency of blemish sorting helps make Compac's solution an industry leader. InVision 9000 can provide the following benefits:

- Increased throughput via intelligent distribution optimisation systems
- Increased throughput by removing unwanted fruit prior to the processing line without the requirement for labour
- Increased throughput by maximising existing packing line capacity
- Improved accuracy and consistency, reducing the variations and costs in grading by hand
- Reduction in labour
- Savings on wax and other processing costs
- Designed to integrate with existing equipment and able to be customised to individual requirements for maximum benefit
- Unsurpassed accuracy through 100 percent viewing of the fruit and unique features
- Unique design offers low maintenance and minimal cleaning to maintain optimum performance
- Increased profits by reducing overall packing costs

CSE Sizer V10

CSE Sizer V10 is a high performance software engine to add more power to new Compac sorters and able to be retrofitted to existing sorters. This simple to use software literally "thinks" differently from any other sorter engine on the market, enabling a packing line to move into the fast lane of performance and profitability. Designed with the future



and automation in mind, CSE Sizer V10 can be the key for achieving efficiency gains and improved staff performance.

CSE Sizer V10 Features include:

- Customised Graphical User Interface – simple to use, real time information at a glance
- Intelligent Produce Distribution – more flexibility and faster sorter reaction time
- Dynamic Outlet Allocation Option – automated machine balancing for maximum production
- Selective Produce Distribution Strategies – produce automatically change destination based on demand
- Advanced Electronic Interface Options – connect and communicate with peripheral equipment
- Line Speed Electrical Interface Option – software controls motor speeds automatically to maximise production
- Advanced Reporting Comprehensive Documentation and Online Help
- Functions – report on any aspect of production
- User interface currently in 4 languages with more to come
- New batch totalling, statistics, and information processing and much, much more

For further information please contact:

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