

19 August 2003

Media Release

Reedley, California fruit packing supremos **Gerawan Farming** are not big on gambles, however calculated, but a move away from the ordinary, has the company cruising its way through packing and sorting with better results than ever before.

As one of the world's largest growers of stone fruit, packing over 6,000 boxes/hour through its main facility, the company has been wrestling with caution over technology for the past few years.

President, Dan Gerawan, explains: "We wanted to move away from a manual system to distribute fruit to the packing labor. We tried one automated system, but we weren't thrilled with its performance."

Dan says the company decided to try relative newcomer, Compac Sorting Equipment Ltd, which had been making inroads into North America packhouses with its innovative blemish grading for citrus fruit and NIR camera technology.

"We already had one of Compac's smaller sizers and were very comfortable with their equipment. The more we talked to Compac, the more we realised they were people like us. They understood exactly what our business was, and they knew our needs because they all had experienced the same problems and goals, as growers and packers themselves," he says.

"Their depth of experience is amazing and we felt that, at last, someone was listening to us to find an answer that would suit us, not try to put us into a pre-determined box."

Gerawan had initial reservations that the company, being based in New Zealand, would not be as accessible or knowledgeable as one locally based. "But," he says, "we were wrong. The company was willing to agree to a local inventory and on-site service. We took them at their word – and they've kept it. We were especially pleased to hear that Compac won the Sun Pacific job."

(Compac's InVision 9000 blemish grading technology and packing machinery was selected for Sun Pacific's mammoth new 10-acre citrus packhouse in California because of its well-proven track record in blemish grading. This single order comprised 40 lanes of pre-grade blemish grading machinery around 65 metres long and 12 lanes of final grade sizer that stretch out to 70 metres long.)

"It has been a real breath of fresh air to have a supplier who looks at things from our angle. Compac speaks our language."

Gerawan installed a Compac SLS to pack apricots. After running the SLS, they felt confident enough to embark on a larger scale installation of two 5-lane machines in 2002 and another two 5-lanes in 2003.

The motivating factor for Gerawan was Compac's technology and the company's clear commitment to continuous development and advancing the performance of their equipment. Even on day one, the Compac sizer was performing right up to expectation.

“Aside from gently and accurately sizing our fruit, Compac developed a computer program to automatically distribute the fruit to the packing labor. Before that, distribution was determined manually by an operator. The automatic system reacts much quicker and more accurately than would a human, and the end result is that our labor can process more fruit in less time,” says Dan Gerawan.

More information:

- **Dan Gerawan, (559) 638-9281 ext. 304**
- **Jim Doerksen, Compac Sorting Equipment (559) 638 8678 or (559) 970 8500**

About Compac Sorting Equipment:

- Ø *Manufacturers of high speed, accurate sorting systems for fruit and vegetables,*
- Ø *Compac is a world leader in fruit sorting technology, through on-going commitment to research and development.*
- Ø *Visit Compac at www.compacsort.com*