



TOMATO TOPICS



Know-how for Horticulture™

NEWS and INFORMATION
FOR THE PROCESSING TOMATO INDUSTRY

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2005/06 Processing Tomato Season

This season has once again brought a number of challenges although very little rain has fallen across the processing tomato season since planting.

Excessive temperatures were experienced across the processing tomato region in both northern Victoria and southern NSW around the beginning of January. Coupled with the presence of disease some early crops became defoliated, causing fruit to sunburn and breakdown in the paddock.

Harvest commenced this season near Boort/Kerang just prior to the Australian Day Holiday, with NSW and Rochester commencing during the following week. A number of the early crops experienced losses in the paddock due to excessive breakdown and sunburn. Early to mid February saw a number of crops throughout the processing tomato region all needing to be harvested around the same time. This created concern for a number of growers who experienced fruit losses.

Yields from a number of crops have exceeded all expectations with some crops yielding as high as 175 t/ha. Brix levels of a number of crops though have been disappointing with some crops recording Brix levels below 3.5.

This season has seen a number of growers express concern about Brix levels. Under the current Brix pricing scheme with each of the processing companies growers are needing to look at growing higher Brix crops. Taking into account one of the companies Brix payment scheme and contract

harvesting costs the price paid to growers for a crop yielding around 105 t/ha at 4.2 Brix returns a similar crop payment to an 80 t/ha crop at 5.0 Brix. Another example is a crop yielding around 175 t/ha at 3.5 Brix returning a similar crop payment (minus contract harvesting cost) to a crop yielding 95 t/ha at 4.8 solids.

Spreadsheets have been compiled taking into account the Brix payment scheme for each processing tomato company. Growers with contracts to a company will be provided with the associated spreadsheet, enabling them to enter their base price to compare crop payments for varying yield and Brix combinations.

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Solids and Nutrition Update – Doris Blaesing (Serve Ag)

The objectives of the 2005/06 season’s work were to:

1. Investigate the effect of potassium fertilisers on yield and soluble solids
2. Investigate the effect of soil conditioners and manures on soil properties, yield and soluble solids

Provide growers, processing company field staff and advisors with written guidelines and training on crop nutrient management to ensure that findings from the work done in the past 4 years is used to manage yields and soluble solids

The following trails have been conducted to address the objectives under points 1:

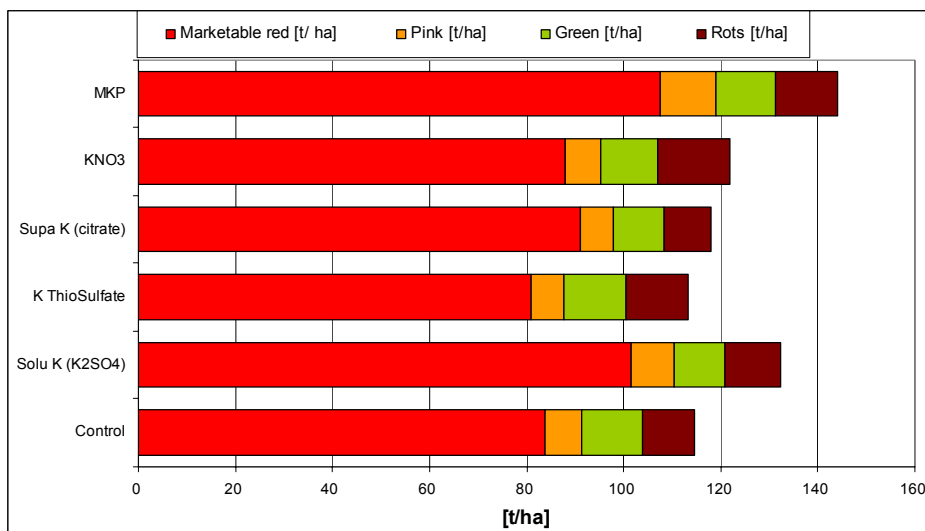
(1) Replicated potassium (K) trial (6 treatments, 4 replicates)

Previous details about the replicated potassium trial are contained in the September and December 2005 Tomato Topics. The trial was harvested in early March and data analysis is currently in progress.

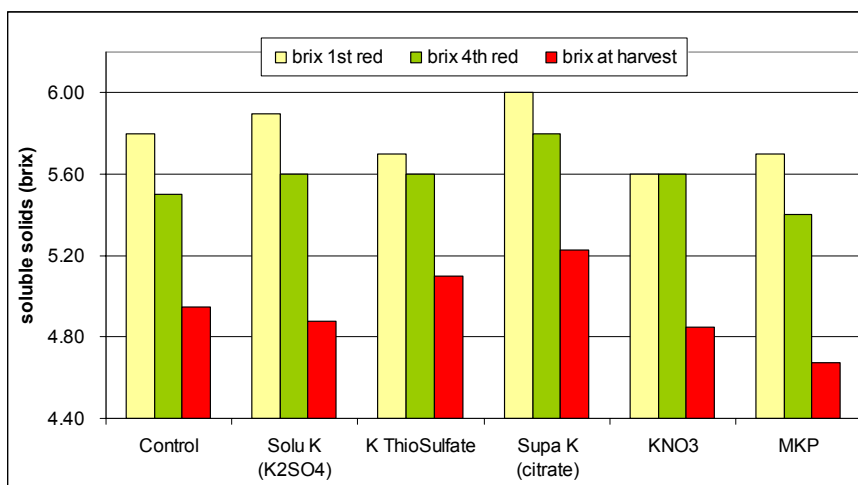
Major findings and observation are:

Additional potassium fertilisers increased plant K levels compared to the control, only Potassium monophosphate (MKP) did not affect K levels but raised plant phosphorus (P) uptake significantly. (The same result was observed in potatoes and strawberries this season, as well and in tomatoes last season during crop monitoring by M.Hind.)

The graphs show that the MKP treatment produced the best yield result (graph 1) but also the lowest solids (graph 2). Graph 3 shows that better yield was due



Graph 1: Trial yield results



Graph 2

to increased fruit set. The yields from MKP and K ThioSulfate were significantly different.

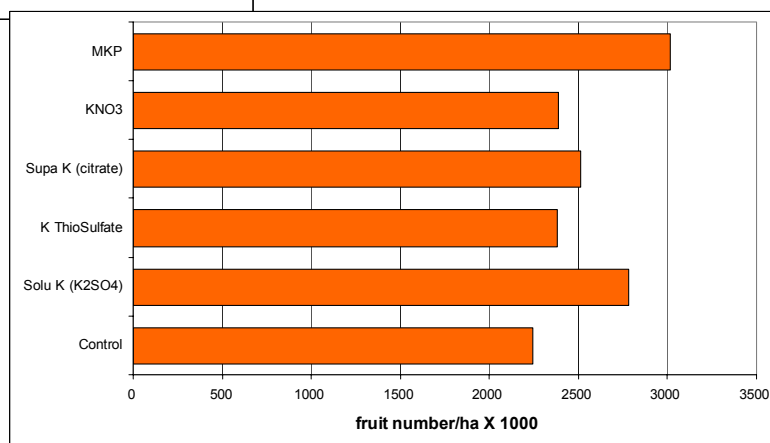
In all treatments solids had dropped at harvest, which may have been due to rain about 1 week before harvest, after the second fruit brix measurement was taken. The soluble solids from the Supa K treatment were significantly different to the solids from the MKP treatment.

Graph 3

The MKP treatment resulted in a significantly higher plant phosphorus level, whereas K Thiosulfate and KNO₃ produced significantly higher potassium levels than the control.

The graphs show that the higher yield was associated with lower solids. The information has to be interpreted considering an economic optimum for the relationship between yield and solids.

Thanks must go to Filippo Mei, Mooroopna, for looking after the trial very well and to Greg Barnes, Serve-Ag Research for conducting this trial diligently.

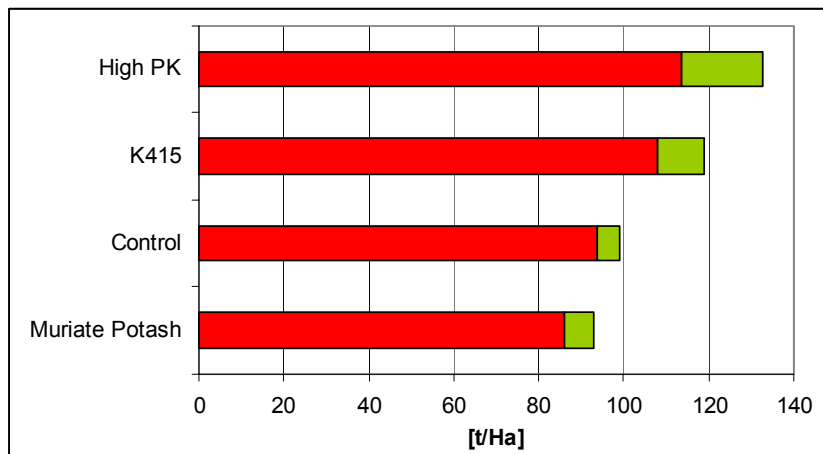


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(2) Field scale potassium trial

Louis Chirnside and Michael Hind (thanks!) conducted a commercial scale potassium trial. Yield results are shown in the below graph. Unfortunately, the highest yielding treatment also received additional Green N (by accident). We will be able to analyse the yield and solids data in combination with nutrient monitoring results and still draw useful conclusions for growers.



Fruit from this trial is currently undergoing nutrient and Brix analysis.



drumMuster

Council Region	Site	Collection notes
Griffith	Tharbogang Landfill	Collections are every Monday between 10:00am and 12:00pm and 2:00pm and 4:00pm. Bookings are essential and can be made by contacting Jim Taylor or Scott Taylor on 02 6963 6491 between 8:30am and 3:30pm.
Jerilderie	Jerilderie Shire Depot	Collections held twice a year May & October or by appointment . Bookings are essential and can be made by contacting 03 5886 1200 or 0427848194.
Murray	Drums Go Round, Moama	Ongoing collections Mon- Fri during business hours For any further information contact 03 5480 0333.
Gannawarra	Kerang Transfer Station	Ongoing collections during opening hours. Tues & Fri 10am to 2pm & Sun 1pm to 5pm. Bookings are essential and can be made by contacting the Council on 03 5450 9333
	Quambatook Transfer Station	Ongoing collections during opening hours. 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month between 1:00pm and 3:00pm. Bookings are essential and can be made by contacting the Council on 03 5450 9333.
Loddon	Boort Landfill	Ongoing collections during opening hours, Mondays between 10am and 2pm, Wednesdays between 1:30pm and 5:30pm, Saturdays between 8am and noon and Sundays between 1pm and 5pm. Contact the Council on 03 5494 1200 for further information.
Campaspe	Lockington Recreation Ground	Collections on set days in May & October. Appointments are not necessary, for further information contact the council on 1300 666 535.
	Colbinabbin Transfer Station	Collections between 9:00am and 3:00pm on set days in May & October. Appointments are not necessary, for further information contact the council on 1300 666 535.

Information for other sites can be found on our website at www.drummuster.com.au.

If any larger growers are or have had difficulties in delivering their drums or they use such volumes that would allow a service to be provided on farm we may be able to assist. A minimum of 1000 drums would normally be required to offer an on farm service, but in some instances some of our **drumMUSTER** approved processors will pick up smaller numbers. For more information please contact: **Graeme Hackett (SNSW Regional Consultant) Phone 02 69710400 Mob: 0248 710400 Email: graeme118@ozemail.com.au Or**

Barry Robinson (WVIC Regional Consultant) Phone: 03 5384 6272 Mob: 0429 846 272 Email: barryrob@netconnect.com.au

Global Processing Tomato News (extracts from Tomato News)

Europe

AMITOM forecast down by 17% in 2006

Some heavy cuts in processing volume are being considered, both in Spain (between 25% and 30% less than in 2005) and in Italy (-13%). These two countries generally produce 75 to 80% of the tonnage processed throughout Europe. That is not to say that the slowdown of activity is good news in and of itself: any positive impact of these more reasonable volumes should only be felt in terms of end-of-year stocks. It is hoped that this will also include a long-term recovery of the European prices paid for tomato products.

The current global situation is exceptional, with European inventory levels estimated to be at 1.7 million tonnes, whereas the total global inventory is estimated at 3 million tonnes. It explains the stagnation of European prices for tomato paste at unsatisfactory levels, whereas they have considerably increased in other areas of the world - and are likely to continue to do so.

California

California tomato processors hope to contract for 10.6 million metric tonnes this year, 23% more than in 2005, according to a government survey released in early February. Processors expect to plant 118 500 ha with tomatoes, producing an average of 88,7 metric tonne/ha, the U.S. National Agricultural Statistical Service reported. That is 12 000 ha than were planted under contract last year.

Processors have not yet announced the 2006 prices, but indications are that they will be USD 58 to 59/ton (about 54 euro/metric tonne). In the short-term, contract prices are probably going to be significantly higher than the USD 50 level they've been hovering around since 2000. *"Pricing for 2006 is up sharply which is a reflection of higher costs and increased recognition of the high risks associated with growing tomatoes,"* said Ross Siragusa, president and chief executive of the California Tomato Growers Association. From 2000 to 2005, prices hovered around USD 50 a ton, which growers said did not cover their costs. It seems that there has been "quite a fight" over raw product prices in the north of the state between a major company and growers. *"Until negotiations are complete, growers are apparently not prepared to plant their early tomatoes - the next few weeks will be critical,"* one key California trader commented. According to Siragusa, 2006 pricing is not settled. However, he added that the southern growing region from Firebaugh south is currently contracting at USD 58 per ton whereas the northern region is at USD 59 to 60 per ton. *"In spite of the anticipated higher contract prices, we do not anticipate a widespread increase in acreage,"* Siragusa said. *"Everyone I've spoken with doesn't believe the acres are there,"* he said, referring to the projected increase in tomato acreage. Plus, the projected yield per acre would be the second-highest average yield in state history. *"At this stage, most people would say it's unlikely."*

So there still seems to be a lot of uncertainty about any real and realistic future prospects for the US production in 2006. A variety of factors lead to a review of processing forecasts: difficult price negotiations (USD 57-58/ton in the south of Central Valley to USD 60-61/ton in the north, an overall range of EUR 52.5 to 55.2/metric tonne), delayed planting (the earliest week of harvest has already been lost, barring exceptionally good weather conditions), unclear planted acreage figures, optimistic yields expectations. For these reasons, processing tonnage forecasts have been reduced from 10.6 million metric tonnes to a more "reasonable" 10 million tonnes.

Update 30th March 2006 from Chuck Rivara, CTRI.

Weather conditions have been cold and wet, delaying planting, with transplanting progressing slowly in the south and yet to really start in the north.

Tomato Innovations

Tomato Chips

Connie's Organic Tomato Chips are not just any tomato chips. A bag of Connie's Organic Tomato Chips brings you the intense flavour of sunripened tomatoes in a compact distillation that lasts a year, or longer if kept in the freezer. Available seasoned with Basil & Oregano or Lemon & Pepper. Useful as an appetizer, snack or recipe ingredient.

Organic Sun-dried Tomato Paté Jar

Olio Beato now offers a variety of antipasto products, to be used before dinner, as a snack, in your cooking, and even to enhance flavour or colour. You can purchase each different "Antipasti" by the jar, by the case, in unique carrying cases and even in a wonderful wooden gift box. This Sun Dried Tomato Spread is the perfect topping for bruschetta, as a dip with breadsticks, and is great in sandwiches. It adds colour as well as flavour to any soup, pasta, or rice dish.

Organic dried tomato halves

These dried tomato halves are conditioned under controlled atmosphere conditions into small transparent bags. The very idea of a "marketing niche" is particularly relevant here because this is the organic fraction of the tomato production that is intended for processing, a fraction that only accounted in 2005 for 25% of the volume of tomatoes harvested (FAO source). Some manufacturers also offer these products with kosher certification.

Mild Sauce

The base of organic mustard and organic tomato puree and other premium ingredients make this All-Star's product an all-around favourite for barbecues, marinades, dipping sauces and condiments.

Finally, tomatoes come in a variety of other forms, including some products that are not intended as food:

Organic Skin Care

Eminence Tomato Sun Cream The Organic Sun Protection from Eminence! Protect and nourish summer skin with a delicious botanical infusion of tomato and herbs to naturally filter out the sun's skin damaging UVB waves.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Irrigation Association of Australia, National Conference and Exhibition/ Vegetable Conference

Wednesday 10th May 2006

Depart Melbourne 8:05 am, Arrive Brisbane 10:10 am
Afternoon: Brisbane Showgrounds – IAA Conference/Exhibition
Stay: Close to Showgrounds

Thursday 11th May 2006

Brisbane Convention Centre – Vegetable Conference

8:30am Exhibition Opens.

9:00am **Innovations:** See presentations from successful vegetable growers who have applied innovation to their business and reaped the rewards. Also in this session hear about what chemicals will be a major force in the future as well as a detailed look into the National Vegetable Levy funded Research and Development program and how it will meet the needs of the industry into the future.

10:30am Morning Tea.

11:00am **Research and Development Showcase – Part A:** Participate in workshops of your choice. These sessions on the latest R&D in vegetables will be presented by experts in the field in the following specific streams; root vegetables, leafy vegetables, Brassicas, caps / toms & greenhouse and other vegetables.

1:00pm Lunch.

2:00pm Research and Development Showcase – Part B: Workshops in crop specific streams continue.

3:15pm Afternoon Tea. Exhibition official closes after this session.

3:45pm **Closing Sessions:** Key note presentation. A summary of key messages and concepts from the conference. Interactive session to follow up. Any comments, questions or issues.

5:00pm Conference closes.

7:00pm **Conference dinner:** Venue: to be confirmed. Cost: AUD \$70. This is not included in any of the registration fees. Dress Code: Smart Casual. The conference dinner will be a key networking opportunity and will be about good food, good wine, and good conversation. Federal Minister of Agriculture, Mr Peter McGauran will be officially launching the new strategic plan for the long term survival of the Vegetable Industry.

Stay Rydges South Bank Brisbane

Friday 12th May 2006 - Depart

Funding from Horticulture Australia has been received to enable growers to attend this at a reduced cost (total cost to growers will be 55% of the full cost)

Please let Liz know ASAP if you are interested in attending.

Annual Processing Tomato R & D Forum and Industry Dinner

Thursday 25th May - Friday 26th May, 2006

7th World Congress on the Processing Tomato &

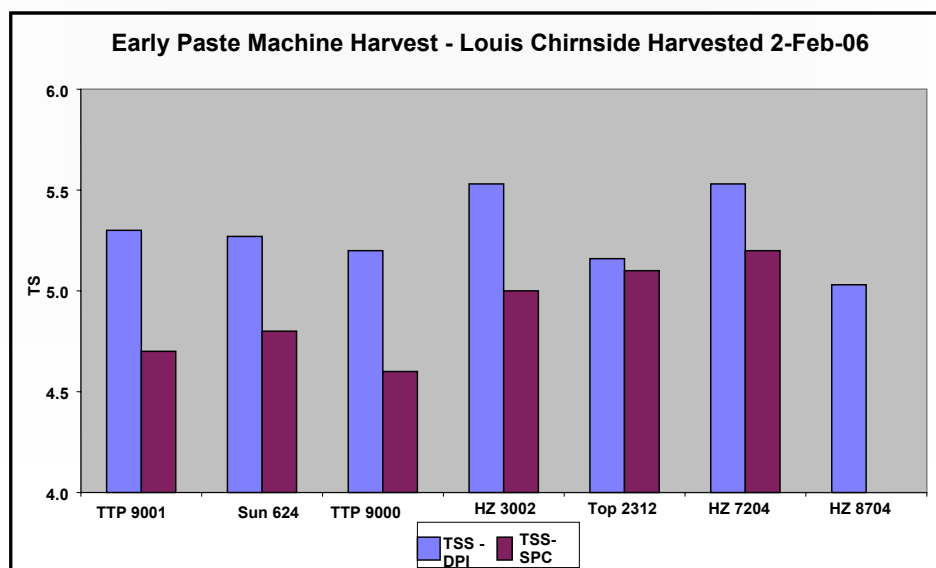
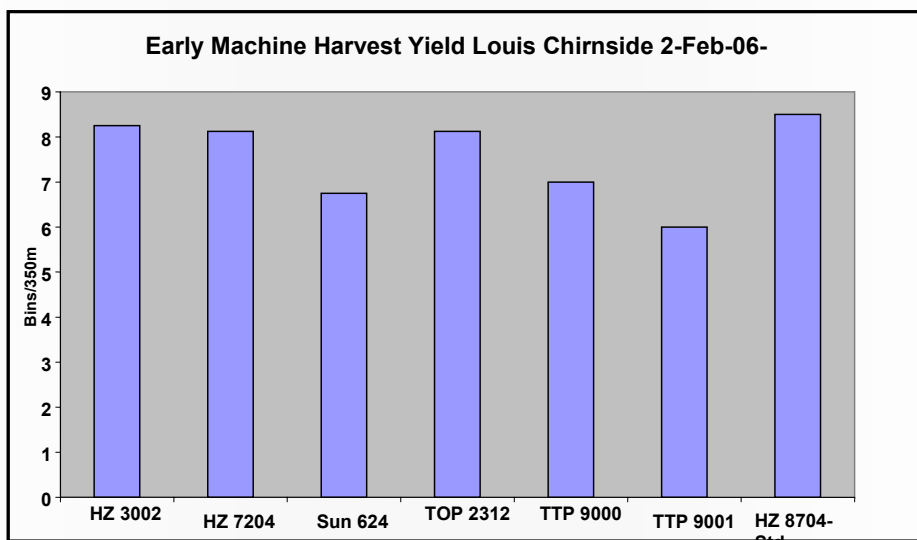
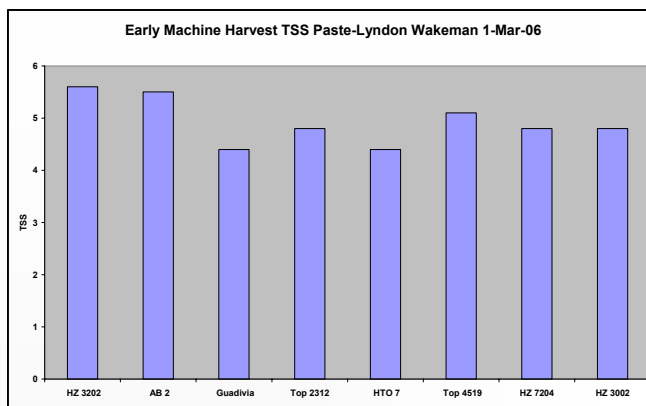
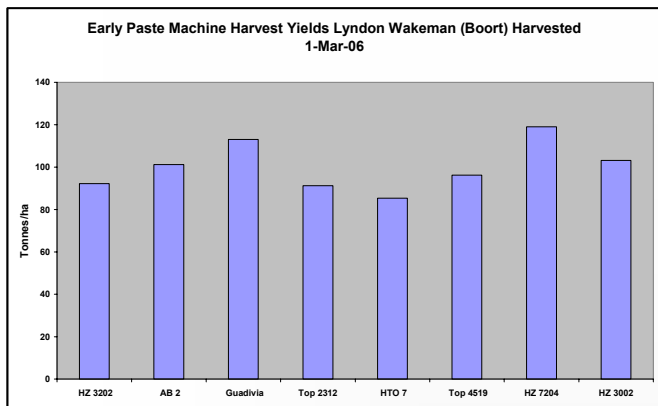
10th ISHS Symposium on the Processing Tomato

5th –8th June 2006, Tunisia, www.worldtomatocongress.com

If you are interested in attending and have not notified Liz please do this ASAP.

Update of Early Machine Harvest Trials in Victoria 2006 - Mike Titley (AHR)

Data from this season's cultivar trials is currently being collated. The yield and solids data from the early machine harvest trials at Boort is shown below. An observation trial containing new varieties has also been assessed in each processing tomato growing region. The full results from these trials will be presented at the Annual Processing Tomato R & D Forum on the 25th May at Echuca.



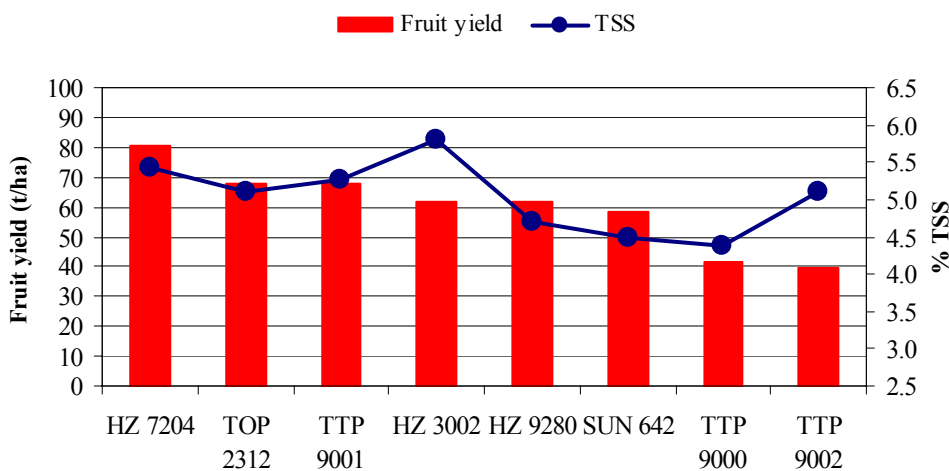
NSW Processing Tomato Machine Harvest Trials - Tony Napier (NSW DPI)

The “early paste” machine harvest” trial was sown on the 8th September 2006 and harvested on the 28th February 2006. This trial was sown near Griffith in a crop of Heinz 9280. The trial contained 8 varieties for evaluation, each sown in a row the length of 296m. The highest yielding variety was Hz 7204 with 80.7 t/ha. Hz 7204 was also the variety with the highest yield of Total Soluble Solids (TSS) with 4.4 t/ha. The variety with the highest percentage of TSS was Hz 3002 with 5.8%.

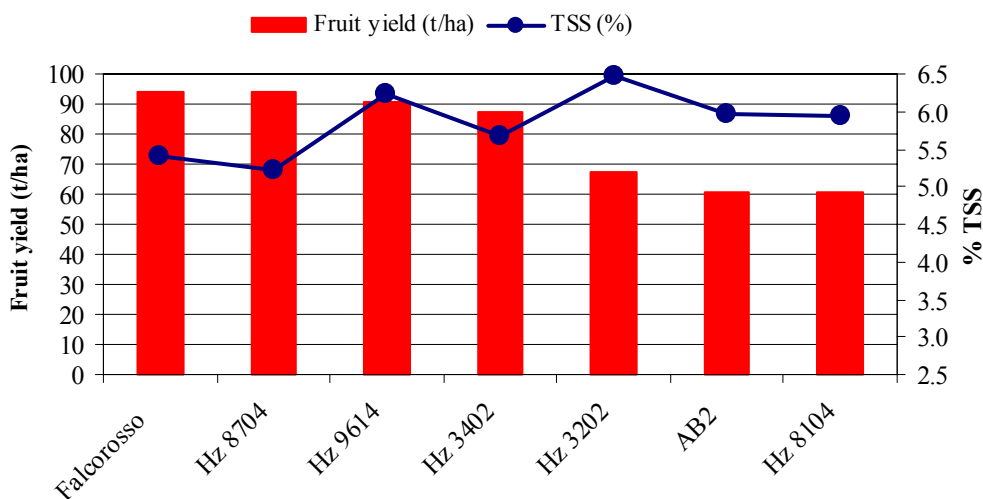
The “whole peel” machine harvest trial was sown on the 12th October 2006 and harvested on the 16th February 2006. This trial was sown at Barooga in a crop of Heinz 8704. This trial contained 7 varieties for evaluation, each sown in a 200m row. The highest yielding varieties were Falcorosso and Hz 7204 with 80.7 t/ha. The variety with the highest percentage of TSS was Hz 3202 with 6.5%. The variety with the highest yield of TSS was HZ 9614 with 5.7 t/ha

The “mid paste” machine harvest trial was sown on the 18th November 2006 and due for harvest in early April. The trial was sown at Jerilderie in a crop of Hz 8704. This trial contains 7 varieties for evaluation, each sown in a 240m row. Results will be available after harvest.

Early season tomato paste trial - Machine harvest



Whole peel tomato trial - Machine harvest



Chemical Permits

The following permit has been issued by the APVMA.

PER7836—Methomyl /tomatoes/Western Flower Thrips

Valid 3/11/05 to 30/10/07

Valid for all states (except Victoria, due to Schedule 7 poison legislative requirements)

CAUTION: Although it is not stated on the permit, acephate may not be compatible with IPM systems.

Caution is also required when using acephate in protected cropping situations.

Check with your advisor before proceeding.

PER7834 - Acephate /tomatoes/Western Flower Thrips

Valid 3/11/05 to 30/10/07

Valid for all states (except Victoria, due to legislative requirements)

CAUTION: Although it is not stated on the permit, acephate may not be compatible with IPM systems.

Caution is also required when using acephate in protected cropping situations.

Check with your advisor before proceeding

PER7833 - abamectin / tomatoes/ Western flower thrips

Valid 19/10/05 to 30/9/08

Valid for all states.

Rates have been clarified and are in line with ap-

proved labels in other situations.

Full details of the permit are available on the APVMA website,

<http://www.apvma.gov.au/permits/permits.shtml>



Endosulfan in the EU

The European Commission have recently published the Commission Decision publicising the fact that endosulfan has not been placed on Annex I, i.e., will no longer be registered for use in the EU.

As a result authorisations for all uses in the EU (other than tomato, potato, peppers, hazelnut, pears & strawberry) are to be withdrawn by June 2 2006. For tomato, potato, peppers, hazelnut, pears & strawberry the uses are to be withdrawn by June 30 2007.

The Commission Decision can be found at the following webpage.

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/l_317/l_31720051203en00250028.pdf

It has been left to individual Member states to determine what periods of grace will be granted to cover treated produce in the supply chain, however the Decision does indicate that it should be as short as possible.

Industry groups exporting to Europe will need to be mindful of these changes with regard to potential residues of endosulfan as levels, for compliance purposes will be set at LOD, i.e., 0.05 mg/kg.

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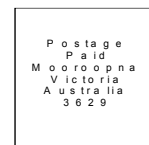
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