



Rjc Harvest Newsletter 2010 - #2

Oh, what a season ...

We are now into our 8th week of the harvest and are at our busiest time of the year. The very unusual weather patterns have made had an impact on the crop, particularly in relation to forecasting the best time to pick each variety. A week ago we thought the Golden Queen peaches would be quite ripe and colourful by today, but the last 5 nights with cool temperatures dropping as low as 10° have slowed the fruit maturity. For some pickers it is possible there may be no work tomorrow, and possibly Thursday as we wait for the peaches to take on more colour that the cannery requires.

Added to the recent cool nights we have rain forecast for later in the week and possibly into the weekend so we will pick at every opportunity as long as the crop is ready. We are even considering working on Saturday if we lose a couple of days to rain and the peaches need to be picked. However, at this stage we cannot be certain and we ask all workers to understand the difficulties we are facing.

It is pleasing to report that this season has been very stable in terms of our work force. Most workers who started with us at the start of the season are still with us. Labour turnover has been lower than previous years and pickers have had good individual daily bin tallies.

Workers have been punctual to start work and this helped considerably. Gangers are reporting good working relationships in their gangs, and it is good to see that most workers are trying to do the right thing in all respects from picking according to our requirements and following safe work practices.

The camp has been running very well this year with most (but not all) respecting the rights of others to get a good nights' sleep. Enjoy your time in the camp but consider the needs of those around you.

Crops yet to pick (in order of picking):

- Golden Queen Peaches – we expect to pick another 1000 tonnes (ie. about another 2,600 bins)
- Taylor Queen Peaches – we should harvest about 1,800 tonnes (another 4,700 bins)
- Granny Smith Apples – up to 3,500 bins!

As you can see there is still a lot of picking to occur.

Our Granny Smith apple crop normally finishes in early April. As mentioned earlier we cannot be any more precise about exactly when we expect to pick each crop as it matures. Most workers who want to stay to pick apples are given the opportunity providing they have been doing the right thing during the peach and pear harvest.

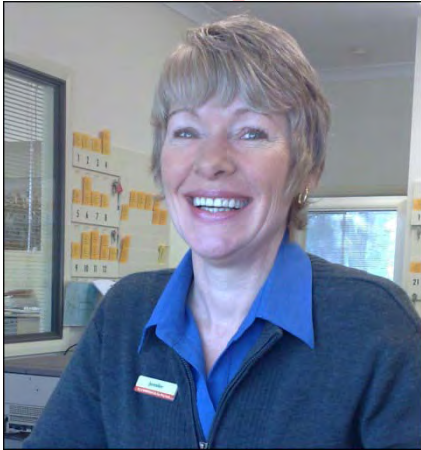
My thanks to all workers who have helped make the season successful to date; this includes all permanent workers and the casual workforce of fruit pickers, gangers, tractor drivers, truck drivers, forklift drivers and the catering staff.

James Cornish
MANAGING DIRECTOR



James Cornish and John Jasper are either planning strategies for the next few days picking or discussing the chances of the Essendon winning the footy this winter!
The smiles suggest the latter option!

Some snaps taken at work this morning ...



Jennifer asks pickers to check their email address on their payslip and advise if it is not correct. If you need a Second Year Visa Form let her know a couple of days before you leave so she can prepare the information.



Helena Blanchfield comes from Ireland where she is a prep-school teacher. She has been in Australia for 8 months now and plans to go to New Zealand, USA, back home and then back to Australia to find a real job!



Originally from Sydney John Alchin is now a local who has been picking for more years than he cares to remember! John also picks lemons with us over the winter. John rides his pushbike everywhere to keep fit!



Eva Melin has been travelling with her partner Swann Ferrand in Australia for the last 4 months. They both come from France where Eva has just completed university where she studied Interior Architecture and Swann works in 3D Graphics.



Ray Fitzpatrick (training officer) and Steve Molloy (Gang 5 Ganger) discuss the new pickers who started work this morning. Ray is a Cobram local who has worked on the orchard for many years and Steve comes back from Queensland for each harvest.



Murray Macbain is still smiling on his first day with in our orchard. Murray and his partner Judy have been travelling in caravans with their friends Kathy and Noel Brooker for the past 3 years and have seen many parts of Australia in that time.

Go the Grey Brigade!



Gina Williams enjoys a peach as she works her last few hours on the orchard and wonders why on earth she is flying back to the UK on Friday and will be back at work in the hospitality industry on Monday of next week in her home town in Wales. Gina has been with us since the start of the season.



Yumi (Mi) from Korea has been with us since the start of the season. She is enjoying travelling throughout Australia with her friend Lee (Heonhyung) Lee and is now on her second year visa. When she returns to Korea Yumi will resume nursing. Hope you have enjoyed Australia Yumi!



Gary Thompson (tractor driver) and Les Chandler (truck driver) share a joke about them being the hardest workers on the orchard! They are part of an important group of workers who help prepare the orchard for harvest and cart the fruit to our customers for canning and sale as fresh fruit in the supermarkets.

A colour copy of this newsletter can be downloaded in pdf format from our website www.rjcornish.com