

Productivity is more than just speed

MARCO

Packing fresh produce faster seems like good business practice - getting your quota of punnets out of the pack house as soon as possible to keep clients happy, as well as saving on labour charges. This theoretically is what every pack house manager dreams of.

Except the faster you pack, the greater the potential for less accurate results. And in the fresh produce world, this means less presentable produce and crucially, more giveaway. There is also another by-product of packing extremely quickly- pack house trials have shown that operators generating the most punnets per minute also generate the most waste. Conversely, some operators may generate no waste at all - which sounds great in practice, but ultimately means unsaleable poor quality product is probably on its way to the client, which will damage customer loyalty.

Measuring waste is relatively simple - as the operator weighs every punnet that they pack, the final pack weights are already recorded and so all that remains is to weigh the field crate when they have packed everything they can from it. This will give the pack house manager a live indication of the balance between finished saleable packs and the individual waste values - which together, form the mass balance for their pack house.

As well as understanding how much waste product is

generated in relation to the total volume packed as saleable punnets, this data will give an accurate depiction of an operators' performance. Whilst speed and dexterity are generally good indicators of performance, once you add in waste and giveaway to the calculation, you can truly see who is performing exceptionally and who needs help.

Monitoring operator performance by means of a live efficiency screen will enable a pack house manager to see a true performance productivity indicator - a perfect blend of speed, accuracy, minimal giveaway and realistic quantities of waste. Operators hitting their targets will be displayed in green, operators packing too fast and clumsily with too much waste will be highlighted in red, or too slowly or with too little waste will be displayed in flashing red. And with targeted training allocated to those in red, before too long, your pack house can achieve packing utopia.

