

# SUPPLYLINE



NEWS FROM MG MARKETING

GROWER PROFILE.

JACKSON ORCHARDS LTD



← Mark Jackson with MG Representative Andrew Cross

↑ Mark & Kevin Jackson from Jackson Orchards



**Crops grown across 25.5 Ha**



main crop  
Apricots





Peaches, Nectarines, Plums,  
Cherries, Greengages, Apples & Pears

## INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS & INNOVATION PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR FIFTH GENERATION GROWERS

Giving up summer holidays and playing weekend sports is all part of growing up when you're a fifth-generation orchardist. Carrying on the family legacy was one of the reasons Mark Jackson wanted to continue what his father Kevin started at Jackson Orchards, just outside the picturesque town of Cromwell in Central Otago.

Jackson Orchards grow predominantly apricots, but also a variety of peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, greengages, apples and pears during their season from November to April.

The family have run the current property since 1989. This was after they were bumped off the original orchard Kevin purchased in the Cromwell Gorge in 1969, which was acquired by the government to make way for the Clyde Dam in the 80s.

"When we had to leave the orchard in the gorge, I decided not to carry on growing fruit and started looking at other business options," said Kevin. "But Mark and his sister Kirstin were keen to stay in the business and had a passion for the growing."

For Mark it was an easy transition from being raised on the land to working on it full-time.

"Life was pretty good growing up on the orchard in the gorge," says Mark. "When I was

around 18 Dad asked me what I wanted to do and it was pretty clear I was keen on life on the orchard."

Kevin joked that the conversation reminded him of when he told his parents he wanted to get into growing and they tried to talk him out of it.

"When we decided to develop a new orchard, this old sheep farm was the logical place," said Kevin. "It's the right location and also has a bit of history as it was the first property settled in the Upper Clutha district by a gentleman called Jackson Barry who became the first mayor of Cromwell."

"When we bought this property it was all bare land," added Mark. "This original homestead, where I live now, dates back to 1862."

You'd think that with a family history of growing dating back to the early 1860's they knew it all. But Kevin, Mark and Kirstin (who runs the Freeway operation), have continued to learn and evolve. They love all the complexities, challenges and the various elements of orcharding, innovating and packing. Bringing all the skills together to constantly produce high-quality fruit people love eating.

Kevin encourages his children to talk to other growers, as he has done over the years and his father, grandfather and great-grandfather did before him.

"I was brought up in an environment where growers exchanged ideas," said Kevin.

"Our orchard was in the town of Alexandra when I was young and there was a hort-inspector who lived nearby. Because my father's orchard was in the town, we were often involved in trials and would host field days for growers to come and take a look."

"Then, on Fridays, growers would often come into town and while their wives were getting groceries, the men would call in for smoko. It's where a lot of good ideas were exchanged."

"We've always welcomed other local growers in, sometimes we even get interest from other parts of the world."

When you visit Jackson Orchards you can see the innovation immediately. The fruit trees are grown using the tatura trellis - a close-planting system where the trees are trained to form a V shaped canopy.

"We find that we grow a better quality of fruit, partly because they're sheltered and partly because the pickers get a better view of the fruit. When it comes to pruning the tree and hand-thinning, they make a better job of it, so at the end of the day fruit is better when it comes to harvesting," said Kevin.

"And the economics stack up with one acre being equivalent to three acres in production which leads to enormous gains - for the 30 ha we put in we would have had to plant 90 ha to get the same tonnage."

The orchard would also have to be one of the tidiest in New Zealand. This is not only because they offer orchard tours as another profit line, but Kevin says it results in less wastage.

Jackson Orchards started its ongoing relationship with MG in the early days of growing and Kevin described the relationship as "faultless". He recalls the time a MG employee, (and future CEO) Tom Treacy, persuaded him into becoming a shareholder - a decision he is pleased with today.

"I think it was about forty pounds to sign up as a shareholder," says Kevin. "Back then I didn't have 40 pounds but Tom talked me into it and somehow, I scratched it together. It ended up being a great decision with bonus shares and dividends over the past few years."



## A SMALL BUSINESS FULL OF BEANS

Working day-in and day-out on 14.5 hectares of fertile Hawke's Bay land growing predominantly beans, but also broccoli and a small area of crown pumpkin, you could say Andrea Young has green fingers. Once you hear more you might say she has market gardening practically flowing through her veins.

As a child growing up in Palmerston North, she spent time working in the family business where her father grew a wide range of vegetables.

"He was the older of five Leong brothers who have all been involved in market gardening," says Andrea. "You pick a lot up as you go along."

When you get talking about C&A Young, a market garden business Andrea runs with her husband Chris, you realise that not only have they drawn on generations of knowledge, but that their success is also down to a lot of hard work.

Starting with a modest roadside retail business in Havelock North, the couple then took over a growing operation from Chris's parents, who retired in 1994. They maintained a lot of the traditional methods while also reshaping the business from a market garden growing a range of brassicas and root vegetables to one that focused on a small number of crops.

"We mainly grow green beans but also grow broccoli in the winter and a small area of crown pumpkin," says Andrea. "The move to beans was driven by a decision to specialise and put our energy into doing them really well."

The game-plan is to concentrate on producing beans continuously throughout the growing season, meaning they can ride out the low periods and capitalise on the good times.

For Andrea, it's about keeping things simple and focusing on achieving a superior result. The beans are planted and constantly watered. Once picked, they're washed, graded, packed into crates and transported to MG the same day. While it sounds straightforward, great care is taken at each stage of the journey to ensure that only the finest beans end up in the market.

"We have a team of locals who pick all our beans by hand," says Andrea. "We could easily invest in a harvester, but you don't get the picking quality - that's why we prefer old fashioned labour."

"I like that it's hands-on but it's a lot of work. We're only small - we're a husband and wife team so we do what we can manage and we have to cover all bases."

The couple are a complementary duo, with Andrea heavily involved in managing the



Crops grown across 14.5 Ha



main crop  
Beans



Broccoli,  
Crown Pumpkin

↑ C&A Young owner Andrea Young oversees the bean harvest

workforce, sales and harvest, while Chris manages the land and crop production.

"Sometimes we even have to take separate holidays to make sure somebody is on site overseeing the business," Andrea adds.

Andrea says they can't do it alone and points to the support provided by MG Marketing as a key factor.

"They are up-front with the information they provide and for a business like ours it's important to see what you've sold every day. I appreciate that the update is sent to us directly to help us make business decisions," says Andrea. "Mark Middleton in the Auckland branch works tirelessly to sell our produce, as do the guys in Wellington and I talk to Procurement Manager Andrew Body about what's happening in the business."

"We stick with MG's because they look after us."

### Covid-19 - adapting to change

We were a bit unsure what sort of impact it would have right at the start of lockdown because of the uncertainty around whether our main buyers would be operating.

We wasted a few rows of beans early on because we didn't want to pick if we couldn't sell our product and we also needed the land for planting.

Luckily, from then on it was pretty much business-as-usual with things turning out well as time progressed.

We're really grateful for MG who worked hard to connect our product to buyers. Having the channel to a range of buyers has pretty much saved us, especially having access to Auckland, the biggest market in New Zealand.

It helped that one of our sons came back from university and joined our bubble so together as a team we could carry on planting.

For harvesting we developed a system where our pickers worked together in family bubbles. So instead of having a big group



↑ C&A Young bean harvest

← MG Representatives Andrew Body & Ellery Tappin with Andrea Young

working together we downsized it and had four bubbles, who were all from the same household. There's a lot of space for distancing and the bubbles worked at different ends of the paddock.

We had handwashing protocols and pickers have to wear gloves. From there, it was picking as normal.

Andrea and Chris Young

# RESPONSIBLE SOURCING WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

At MG Marketing (MG), we want to work with likeminded businesses. This includes suppliers who look after their employees, their communities and the environment in a way that is consistent with MG values and sustainability goals. Our expectation is that business is conducted lawfully and with integrity and all people throughout the supply-chain are treated with dignity and respect.

Not only is MG keen to “do the right thing”, our responsible sourcing goals are driven by the fact consumers want to be sure that the fresh fruit and vegetables they purchase comes from growers who treat products, people and the environment in a responsible way.

MG is also committed to supporting our customers at the other end of the supply-chain to achieve their responsible sourcing objectives.

For growers supplying Countdown through MG, that means obtaining a third-party certification from either GLOBALG.A.P. Risk Assessment on Social Practice (GRASP), SMETA (Sedex Members Ethical Trading Audit) or NZGAP Social Practice Add-On.

It is anticipated that other retailers will require growers to show a similar level of compliance in the future.

**MG encourages all growers to think about their practices and consider improving their level of compliance by adding the NZGAP Social Practice Add-On (or other third-party certification).**

Visit the NZ Gap website to find out more about the NZGAP Social Practice Add-On.

### New Zealand GAP: Social Practice add-on CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- 1 Register for NZGAP Social Practice**
  - Complete registration form which you can access [online](#).
  - Registration fee and audit fee to be paid.
- 2 Checklist and Guidelines**
  - Receive Social Practice Checklist, Guidelines and templates in the post.
  - Access an online version of the Social Practice checklist for self-assessment on NZGAP website.
  - Download Checklist, Guidelines and templates from NZGAP website: [www.nzgap.co.nz](http://www.nzgap.co.nz) Programmes | Social Practice add on
- 3 Prepare for your audit**
  - Complete online self-assessment using the Social Practice checklist to prepare for your audit. Key sections of the checklist and guidelines are:
    - ✓ Self-Declaration and Policies,
    - ✓ Employment agreements,
    - ✓ Remuneration/Employee records
    - ✓ Training,
    - ✓ Employment of youth,
    - ✓ Accommodation,
    - ✓ Complaints procedure,
    - ✓ Labour hire contractors
  - Review and implement any required changes using the checklist (online and hard copy), templates and guidelines.
  - There are some additional Social Practice guidelines available on the NZGAP website: [www.nzgap.co.nz](http://www.nzgap.co.nz) Growers | Guidelines
- 4 Audit Options: Stand-alone OR Add-on**
  - Add-on: at your next NZGAP audit OR
  - Stand-alone: audit requested by your market or by your business within the next 12 months (for before your next NZGAP audit)\* \*stand-alone audits will incur additional audit costs above the set audit fee to cover auditor travel and time
- 5 Social Practice Audit**
  - Your market will get in touch if the audit is required prior to your next NZGAP audit.
  - For stand alone audits (as per market request or business request), liaise with your certification body to arrange a date for the audit.
  - If included as part of the NZGAP audit, your certification body will get in touch to arrange a date.
- 6 Implement Continuous Improvement**
  - If there are any issues identified during the audit, do not panic. You are given 28 days to make corrective actions and close out any non-compliances.
  - Continue to implement good social practice for your employees.
- 7 Audit Cycle**

The social practice audit cycle will align with the NZGAP audit cycle. Audits scheduled in Year 1, Year 2 and every 3 years after.

For more information visit our website: <http://www.nzgap.co.nz>  
Or contact us: Phone: +64 4 472 3795 | Free phone: 0508 467 869 | Email: [nzgap@hortnz.co.nz](mailto:nzgap@hortnz.co.nz)



## CONGRATULATIONS

MG Marketing wish to congratulate Woodhaven Gardens and Oakley’s Premium Fresh Vegetables for both winning regional awards at the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

They are both excellent role models within the horticulture sector and MG is fortunate to work alongside growers who contribute a great deal to our business and to the industry as a whole.



### Woodhaven Gardens

#### - 2020 Awards -

- Horizons Region Supreme Winner
- Hill Laboratories Agri-Science Award
- Norwood Agri-Business Management Award
- Synlait Climate Stewardship Award
- WaterForce Wise with Water Award

In recent years, Woodhaven has significantly invested in reducing its environmental impact, adopting a science-led approach that balances conservation with commercial success.

The judges said major changes to farming practices have resulted in a significantly reduced environmental footprint, with further improvements ongoing.

“Woodhaven is a leader in research for the vegetable industry – contributing time, money and land in order to

measure and provide evidence. This large-scale fresh vegetable growing operation is driving change in environmental sustainability.”

They commended the Clarkes for shifting production areas in order to reduce nitrogen loss and minimise the impact on water quality.

Woodhaven’s owners and directors view the farm holistically – growing for themselves while also enriching the lives of their staff, community, local iwi and environment.



↑ The Clarke family from Woodhaven Gardens



### Oakley’s Premium Fresh Vegetables

#### - 2020 Awards -

- Hill Laboratories Agri-Science Award
- Ballance Agri-Nutrients Soil Management Award
- Massey University Innovation Award

The judges commended Oakley’s for using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to determine when to apply pesticides, backing their commitment to using minimal fertilisers and chemicals. They’re working with Plant & Food Research to release a wasp that biologically controls pest insects, plus have a strong focus on reducing their environmental footprint – for example 70% of water is recycled.

Maintaining the health of plants reflects the business’s innovative approach, another aspect praised by the judges. For example, Oakley’s uses quality genetics to achieve high-grade, maximum yields

while reducing inputs. They’re constantly trialling new material as they fine tune what works best. They’re also innovative in their use of technology, whether it be for machinery, communication or monitoring.

The result is consistently high-quality vegetables and, ultimately, happy customers. The judges were impressed with the business’s flexibility to meet changing consumer needs and an outstanding commitment to customer satisfaction. Staff wellbeing is a priority, as is supporting the local community with both sponsorship and produce.



↑ April and Robin Oakley from Oakley's Premium Fresh Vegetables

## STANDPOINT.



## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

I'd like to use this edition of StandPoint to provide you with an update about how MG Marketing (MG) has been tackling the Covid-19 pandemic.

At MG, our teams have shown the kind of spirit we've come to expect. We are proud of the way we've been helping New Zealand through this pandemic by keeping everyday Kiwi's supplied with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Our people have been flexible, adapted quickly to working in a different way, worked different hours, worked in new teams, completing different tasks and stuck to the strict Covid-19 protocols we put in place. I am also filled with admiration for the resilience they have shown.

We are equally pleased with the way we are working with our growers and customers, whether that's changing the way we distribute product, helping find a home for excess produce or supporting them as they get back on their feet.

While we all grapple with the current impact of Covid-19, MG and the wider horticulture industry are also dealing with uncertainty surrounding the future.

Navigating challenges is not new for MG and over our 97-year history we have become well-practised in adapting to change by quickly taking action.

It's still a moving situation which means our business is prepared to work with both growers and customers in very different ways as we come up against different challenges to the ones we were facing two months ago.

I am also hearing incredible stories about how our growers, customers and our employees have stepped up to help families, neighbours and communities.

In these difficult times, these heartening stories highlight that we are "all in this together" as we head down the road that will lead us back to more normal times.

I'd like to finish by affirming that MG is strong. We are strong because of the deep relationships we have with customers, the backing we have from the growers we represent and a proven ability to deliver under pressure.

® Together.Stronger.

Peter Hendry  
CEO

## MG AND NZ GROWERS OFFER TONNES OF SUPPORT



MG Marketing (MG) and its grower-suppliers joined forces with New Zealand food banks to ramp up donations to support vulnerable communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Food banks have had a significant surge in demand for their help due to the economic impact of Covid-19 and the toll it has taken on everyday New Zealanders.

With food service businesses and independent produce retailers unable to take their usual volumes during the pandemic crisis, growers had some excess produce on-hand. Rather than this end up being wasted or ploughed back into the ground, MG partnered with a range of food banks to redirect the fresh fruit and vegetables to New Zealand's most vulnerable.

Auckland City Mission CEO/City Missioner, Chris Farrelly, said, "The Auckland City Mission is so thankful for MG Marketing's

support. As a result of Covid-19, the number of food parcels we provide to people in need has increased dramatically, from about 450 to more than 1,200 a week."

"MG Marketing's donations of produce help us meet this increased demand and ensure families needing help have good quality, fresh and delicious food. We've had really wonderful feedback. People are so happy to see treats like beautiful peaches, mangos and avocados in the food boxes as well as lots of other lovely fresh fruit."

MG's National Key Account Manager, Jerry Prendergast said, "we donated around 25,000kg of fresh fruit and vegetables, providing healthy food options to thousands of vulnerable New Zealanders, including low-income families and the elderly."

"Our team at MG and the growers we represent take real pride in helping out Kiwis who've been struggling".



↑ A meet and greet with Farmstrong Ambassador and All Black Sam Whitelock

## GETTING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

All industries have challenges and growing is no different. Weather patterns, fluctuating prices, changing legislative requirements, media stories and now issues surrounding Covid-19 are all part of the pressures farmers and growers deal with.

The good news is that you can prepare mentally and physically for these pressures by proactively investing in your wellbeing. This means you'll be more resilient to handle the ups and downs.

Below are some tools and tips that farmers and growers have told us work for them.

### STAY CONNECTED

First give yourself permission to feel the way you do. Everyone has off days so cut yourself some slack.

But if you're feeling that way, chances are your neighbour is too. So connect with others, your mates, your family. Don't bottle it up, share the load. Talking about challenges and frustrations with others really helps people get through tough times.

### INVEST IN YOUR WELLBEING

We know growing is a job with a unique set of challenges, that's why growers are known for being epic problem-solvers. But no one can control the weather let alone what's happening with Covid-19.

However what you do to look after your physical and mental wellbeing is within our control. Just like you look after your land and equipment to ensure they perform well, there are things you can do to look after yourself too.

Farmstrong talk about having a 'Wellbeing Bank Account'. Think of your wellbeing like making small investments in your account. These will add up over time so that when you're under the pump, you can draw on them to help you get through. Simple but it works.

The investments you can make are - keeping physically fit and in condition, eating well and having the right fuel in the tank, staying connected and having good relationships with staff, friends, family and your local community, having planned breaks and organising regular time off to recharge your batteries and adopting helpful strategies to deal with unhealthy stress.

We all know healthy crops need small, regular amounts of water to thrive. We don't wait until they've almost dried up, douse them and expect them to bounce back. The same goes for you. Small, regular investments in your wellbeing bank account will make you much more likely to cope well with pressure.

### TAKE A BREAK FROM THE NEWS

Taking a break from the news related to the Covid-19 crisis can be invaluable and instead try spending the time you free up to focus on stress relieving activities. Also remind yourself that there is lots of support from kiwis for the work you do.

So if a few headlines are stressing you out, take a break from the news and social media and stop to enjoy the view from 'your office' or connect with your mates.

This article was adapted with permission from Farmstrong-  
[www.farmstrong.co.nz](http://www.farmstrong.co.nz).