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Harvest 2017



What a Whopper!

We're all agreed on one thing here – this has been one of the most interesting, and challenging, seasons in a good many years.

Weather conditions earlier in the year conspired to reduce the overall volume of the top fruit crop across Europe. According to WAPA (the World Apple and Pear Association), apple production in Europe will be down on last year by around 21%.

That same weather also conspired to produce a high proportion of fruit that is, quite simply, enormous. As I write there is a Bramley apple on my desk that measures 14 centimetres across, and that's not the biggest I've seen by a long way.

Sadly, biggest isn't always best. These gigantic apples are outside the norms of the machines that would usually peel and core them. Even our world-class Atlas machines have limits!

It also means that, with a higher proportion of larger fruit, careful consideration needs to be given to how segments in particular will appear in finished products.

The good news is that the fruit we are seeing so far looks excellent and the team here are always on hand to give advice on the Bramley apple cuts that will deliver the optimum results for your particular requirements.



Phil's Report

Change. Good or Bad?

In a recent blog I wrote about living in 'interesting times' and that certainly is proving to be the case.

I've been talking to everyone I can about their views on Brexit. Although I can't claim that the results are scientific, the impression I'm getting is that there are two distinct types of response and nothing in between.

On the one hand I'm talking to people who only see downsides to Britain's exit from the EU – higher prices for imported foods, poor exchange rates, lower migrant workforce numbers and lower regulation.

On the other hand, I'm talking to people who only see upsides to Britain's exit: higher prices for imported foods, poor exchange rates, lower migrant workforce numbers and lower regulation.

And that's the issue in a nutshell: the same facts can be interpreted in very different ways.

One major worry of course is the European labour pool. In the UK, we've been reliant on overseas workers contributing to the seasonal workforce (and the year-round workforce in fairness) for some time now. I've already heard reports of workers switching their labour into other European countries where the hourly rate might be lower but, because of the sterling exchange rate, the money might be worth more in their home country. English Apples & Pears, and other trade bodies throughout our industry, are lobbying Government to make post-Brexit accessibility for this essential workforce as easy as possible – this is not a 'nice-to-have', it's a 'must-have'.

Conversely, if Brexit means that food supply chains

become shorter and more transparent, if consumers once again see the quality and value in British produce and if retailers are forming deeper partnerships with their food growers and suppliers to secure sustainable supplies these all redress an imbalance in the UK that's been around for far too long. Add to that the potential environmental benefits that an overall reduction in food miles could bring and these are also all 'must-haves' not 'nice-to-haves'.

I can't remember anything quite as divisive as Brexit but I do remember one thing: in every major change there are winners and losers – the key is making sure we're amongst the winners!

And talking of 'winners', since the last time I wrote for Fruit Focus I've taken part in a bit of a life-changing event of my own: on 23rd August I married Kate and I'm delighted to report that change is a very good thing indeed!

Phil. (Managing Director of Fourayes, Chairman of English Apples & Pears, Fruitarian and Mad Scientist).

Some more excellent news!

As we were going to Press with this edition of Fruit Focus we received some great news: Fourayes has been selected as a finalist in this year's Food Manufacture Excellence Awards; in the 'Fresh Produce Manufacturing Company of the Year' category.

Being selected as a finalist is important to us, not least because these particular awards are so highly regarded. But even more importantly it's because we passionately and relentlessly pursue the standards that awards like this seek to recognise.



Fourayes is now even more *dynamic*

In the last edition of Fruit Focus Phil talked in his Report about the new Dynamically Controlled Atmosphere stores we've been building over the summer months. The building work is now completed and we're already putting our fruit for long term storage, from this year's harvest, in to these amazing new storage facilities.

These leading-edge technology stores take the monitoring and management

of fruit quality to new levels: computers minutely adjust the storage atmosphere at any sign of fruit stress which ensures that the stored fruit – in our case Bramley apples – really is kept in tip top condition for up to 12 months.

We've won many long-term storage awards for our fruit in the past but with our new DCA stores that means the best just got even better!



What's **red**, has wheels and means a lot to us all?

It's the Red Tractor Assurance scheme of course.

Red Tractor Assurance is like BRC for farming and it's the guarantee that British produce meets the fruit growing, environmental and workers' standards that deliver the very best for consumers.

All the major British supermarkets insist on Red Tractor Assurance (or a mirror of it) for their fresh produce but, sadly, the fruit that goes into baked goods and desserts isn't necessarily subject to the same requirements.

The good news is that all of the fruit we use in our factory here at Fourayes

comes from Red Tractor Assurance farms, which means our customers, and their customers, know that they are getting the very best fruit, and the highest quality standards, available.



Fourayes gets its own **Siberian Tiger!**

We're talking about Maria, our latest recruit to the administration team. Originally from Omsk in Siberia, Maria came to us from Crossley Group Accountants having spent several years working in commercial management

accountancy analysis and audit. Maria's unique management accountancy skills will be fundamental to Fourayes fully exploiting the capabilities of our powerful, tailored MRP system.

Our 100 acres of English Bramley apple orchards might be modest compared to the 13.1 million Km² that Siberia extends to but the welcome from everyone at Fourayes for Maria is just as big!



It's not just **IT**, it's **MJ**



Another welcome addition to the team here at Fourayes is MJ our IT specialist and all-round technical titan.

MJ has already been

instrumental in upgrading our servers to make even more of our powerful MRP system and improve communications and reporting throughout the business.

A keen golfer with a handicap of 11, MJ also plays tennis regularly and in his remaining free time is a published author of the Energy Chronicles and the Magic Chronicles series' of books.

On board & on the Board

September saw the welcome promotion of Carl Vasse to the Fourayes Board – where he will join Phil (Acock), Jon (Paterson) and Jo (Wells).

Carl came to Fourayes from Kerry Group in 2014 as Senior Account Director and has been instrumental in supporting a growing range of products offered by Fourayes to our customers.

Carl is married to Sharon and they have four children. The youngest, Thomas, will

shortly be starting a career with the RAF. Carl is more of a water man though, spending his weekends with family and friends aboard his river cruiser on the Withem. So it's welcome on board and welcome to the Board for Carl!





Orchard report

Winter 2017 from Ian



Hello and Welcome

At the time of writing we have just finished our first pick of the Bramley. It has so far been a fairly dry harvest: we lost two half days to the rain and had a couple of showers. We look set to have an Indian summer which will help with the rest of harvest. The experiment I spoke of earlier involving the codling and tortrix moths and the pheromone spoilers meant that the male moths become confused, could not find a female to mate with and no moths were caught in the monitoring traps. So for the entire season we did not have to spray for these two moths and next year we will look to expand the experiment across the farm. Our newest bramley orchard is looking good after all the summer rain we have had. It has also given us bigger

bramley this season than we have had in years. The Wooley APHID I have spoken of in the past had been a real problem in some of our orchards this season; we have only just managed to keep it at bay.

The rabbits on the farm remain at similar numbers to last year, so not much need to control again but another farm close by has asked me to help control rabbits on their patch. Our badgers are still increasing; buzzards are still in good numbers. There are quite a few pheasants about the farm and more grey squirrels than I have seen in previous years. I almost caught one recently by the tail as it ran past me at arm's length.

All the Best,
From Ian Witherden
and all at Fourayes Farm



The Rainfall at Fourayes

