

Major vegetable exporter counts on IT crop monitoring

For the last three seasons, Pukekohe-based Balle Bros have been using up-to-date technology to monitor their crops. The company produces a wide variety of export vegetables, including onions, potatoes, squash, carrots and pumpkin.

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Eamon Balle—Balle Bros

Balle Bros needed to gather and constantly review its inputs and therefore chose CropWalker from Muddy Boots as the solution to its needs.

According to Balle Bros, investment in the software system has proven itself in use. Currently the system consists of two laptop PCs running standard versions of CropWalker including ProCheck auditing, and two PocketPC devices running the companion Pocket CropWalker software. These mobile units are used in the field and then hooked up to the laptops in the office for easy downloading of the data for record-keeping, analysis and reporting.

Balle Bros. say they would 'be lost without the product', adding that utilising CropWalker has allowed them to closely monitor chemical inputs, no matter where their staff happen to be. One of the key benefits cited is the significant cost-saving as they can now ensure that they only input exactly what is necessary and when it is most beneficial to the crop.

In addition, there is a considerable amount of time saved which frees up staff to handle other tasks around the farm, as well as virtually eliminating the hours of paperwork required previously to keep records - a must-do for a produce exporter. Now everything is recorded directly into the portable PDA units, and is available for review at a touch of a button, anywhere and at any time.

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With all this convenience and computing power at their disposal, Balle Bros. says they have complete faith in the system, and especially like the fact that the records of what's being done with each crop are constantly evolving, allowing the company to make regular improvements to its growing regime, allowing for further savings in future.

With only a few clicks staff can see exactly what's been applied and when, which is ideal for confirming withholding periods for export crops. A wide range of hard copy reports can be obtained via the laptop as and when necessary.

Balle Bros. also use CropWalker to manage chemical stocks and stores on farm, and say CropWalker can be used for monitoring financial inputs and outgoings, as well as for the ordering of chemicals, fertilisers, and seeds.

Applied	No	Operator	GS	Area	Product	Active	Reason	Rate	Water Vol	HWHP Days
11/07/2004	19	Edward Dickens	02	12.00	CHLORO IPC	chlorpropham hydrocarbon liquids	Residual Herbicide	1.50 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
11/07/2004	19	Edward Dickens	02	12.00	CHLORONION 4417	chloridazon	Residual Herbicide	1.50 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
11/07/2004	19	Edward Dickens	02	12.00	MBC 50 WP	carbendazim	Botrytis rot	0.50 kgs/ha	300 Lts/ha	
11/07/2004	19	Edward Dickens	02	12.00	PEPTOIL	paraffin based petroleum oil polyoxyethylated polyol fatty acid ester polyol fatty acid ester and antifoam	Sticker	1.00 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
20/07/2004	20	Edward Dickens	12.00		CHLORO IPC	chlorpropham hydrocarbon liquids	Residual Herbicide	1.50 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
20/07/2004	20	Edward Dickens	12.00		CHLORONION 4417	chloridazon	Residual Herbicide	1.50 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
20/07/2004	20	Edward Dickens	12.00		MBC 50 WP	carbendazim	Botrytis rot	0.50 kgs/ha	300 Lts/ha	
20/07/2004	20	Edward Dickens	12.00		PEPTOIL	paraffin based petroleum oil polyoxyethylated polyol fatty acid ester polyol fatty acid ester and antifoam	Sticker	1.00 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
27/07/2004	22	Dick Edwards	08	12.00	CY-PRO 90DF	cyanazine	Post emergence Weed control	0.15 kgs/ha	300 Lts/ha	28
27/07/2004	22	Dick Edwards	08	12.00	TWIN-STAR	fluroxypyr toxyrnl xylene	Post emergence Weed control	0.40 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	63
28/07/2004	21	Dick Edwards	08	12.00	BOND XTRA	Synthetic latex: Organo-silicone	Spreader/Sticker	0.30 lts/ha	300 Lts/ha	
28/07/2004	21	Dick Edwards	08	12.00	MBC 50 WP	carbendazim	Botrytis rot	0.50 kgs/ha	300 Lts/ha	

No Of Water Courses In Block: Dry Ditches: 0 Less Than 3m: 0 Between 3m And 6m: 0 More Than 6m: 0