

# Karsten

The Karsten Group, one of South Africa's largest growers, packers and exporters of grapes, is the latest company to reap the benefits of a Marco Yield Control System (YCM), installed at their pack-house near Koneneiland.

Group Director Pieter Karsten Jnr is very pleased with the installation and as he explains: "Although only commissioned in the latter part of 2011, the multi-station system is already bringing significant improvements to the grape packing line, reducing over-pack (giveaway), improving productivity and reducing labour overheads. Collectively this is contributing directly to our bottom line profitability and is expected to provide a return on investment within 4-6 months."

Grape packing requires a blend of speed, dexterity and care to ensure pack quality is maintained and weights are within packing legislation. The YCM deskills the packing process and ensures punnets are maintained within very close tolerances. As they pass down the packing line, the weights of pre-packed punnets are individually checked at the YCM workstations, staggered either side of the line, to see if they are under-weight, over-weight or within tolerance. The operatives then adjust punnets accordingly by adding or removing fruit.

The YCM features a simple coloured vertical bargraph, which provides pack operatives with a purely visual indication of the weight status of individual punnets, with red/amber lights indicating out of tolerance. In-tolerance punnets are clearly indicated with the central green lights illuminating and once operatives tune into this simple coloured light system, checking and adjusting each punnet takes only a matter of seconds.

A key feature of the YCM is the innovative automatic optimisation (AO) software, which constantly monitors individual packer's punnet weight trends. Based on this real time data, the software continually adjusts the target weights for each station within the preset tolerances to optimize ongoing punnet weights. The packers are unaware of these subtle changes and continue to pack according to the lights. The result is that punnets are continually packed within less than a gram of target weight. Minimal training is required and the lines can be readily reconfigured as required.



Marco have extensive experience working with international pack-houses and the modular design of the YCM makes it ideal for export markets. On site installation and commissioning are very straight-forward and, in most applications, can be accomplished by one Marco engineer in less than a week, including on-site training. The Marco systems have an excellent reliability record and the remote diagnostics/ data analysis capabilities allow Marco engineers to access the system from anywhere in the world and identify and address any problems.



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