Remarkable benefits for mixed fruit orchardist from labour software

FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS, MARK SIM, MANAGER OF REMARKABLE ORCHARDS, HAS USED CLOUD-BASED SOFTWARE TO MANAGE HIS LABOUR PAYROLL AND PRODUCTIVITY AND NO LONGER GIVES UP HIS SUNDAYS POURING OVER SPREADSHEETS TO WORK OUT THE WAGES.

Sim manages 70 hectares of stonefruit, apples and cherries in Roxburgh, Central Otago, one of New Zealand's premium fruit growing regions, nestled under the Old Man mountain range.

Sim says that ABCgrower, a specialist horticulture website with offline capability, has totally changed the business, for the better.

"We've lost all the uncertainty around what's been picked and how much pay is due. There are no more arguments, and everyone is 'happy as Larry'. Doing the wages now is so straightforward. It works out the top ups, and paid breaks automatically, and as there's no more paperwork, we don't agonise over poor handwriting. It really has made everyone happy."

Sim uses the digital tool to check on picker and thinner performance, identifying those that need more training or supervision to lift their output. As his workers can view their ongoing tallies, it's also a motivator for them to lift their game. "They can see their tallies when they scan their buckets and challenge themselves to pick up the pace."

It also makes it easy to show staff an audit of activities recorded should there be any dispute over tallies, saving time and cost. "It's a relief to avoid those niggly arguments."

ABCgrower also allows Sim and his managers to check daily reports to see the financial implications of each day's activities and adjust as needed.

Sim acknowledges that he's not particularly computer savvy but says ABCgrower is very easy to use in and out of the field, which means he's "spending less time sitting in the office". He's also planning on using more of the management functions to improve his productivity performance as time goes on.

"It's been absolutely worth the investment," says Sim who was the first in the region to adopt the technology but whose enthusiasm has seen a growing number of his neighbouring orchardists using it too.

He's also enthusiastic about the developers, ABC Software. "The back-up is outstanding; I think a lot of them. They're responsive to any queries we have, and nothing is an issue."

The horticulture software specialist is currently beta testing a digital orchard spray diary module to add to ABCgrower. It expects to release this late November 2019 and Sim says he will be looking closely at using it.

ABCpacker is another specialist programme that provides tailor-fit solutions for all aspects of packing, marketing and trading. As with ABCgrower, it replaces paperwork and manual entries to improve efficiency and management reporting.

Mark Sim, Manager
REMARKABLE ORCHARDS

It's our job to make yours easier.