

## Horticulture Management Company and Cherry Producer Discovers More Effective Way to Monitor Shipments

**Situation:** Hortinvest Management Ltd, a cherry grower and horticulture management company, specializes in all aspects of the cherry and apricot supply chain, including orchard, packhouse, and export customer relations.

Hortinvest was established in 2016 and is located in the Otago Region on the South Island of New Zealand. "Our orchards are fully integrated. We plan, develop, grow, and we run a team of people. We harvest and then we run the logistics, packing and marketing. We started the business because we saw that there was an opportunity to start a business in Central Otago," says Sharon Kirk, Co-Founder.

The company exports fruit all over the world, but primarily to Asia - Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, India, Indonesia and Taiwan. They use a freight forwarder which is north of Central Otago, in Auckland. This trip can take anywhere from 28 to 48 hours. Typically, at the half-way point, the fruit is changed to another truck.

**Problem:** There were many occasions where the fruit arrived to the freight forwarder in poor condition.

The company finally realized the problem was temperature related, as the fruit was too warm when it arrived. Fruit temperature needs to come down and stay down, otherwise the quality of the fruit is compromised. "The worst thing you can do for fruit is cause the temperature to fluctuate," says Kirk. The company also realized the type of loggers they were using were not the best fit for their needs. One issue was having to wait for the receiver to locate the logger and plug it in to get the temperature data, which could take up to a week after the shipment arrived. Often, clients couldn't find the logger at all at the end of a trip.

The company started tracking the loads using a real-time logger to determine why the fruit was arriving at a high temperature. They decided to load a full truck themselves in Central Otago (24 pallets) and send it straight to Auckland



to see what they would find. Using the real-time logger, they found that the temperature was constantly fluctuating. With the real-time logger, Sharon could see the temperature data on her computer and track it as the shipment moved. Every time the truck doors were opened the temperature went up. Anytime the fruit was being transferred to another truck the temperature went up. They learned that instead of being put in a cooler, it was being left outside in the heat.

**Solution:** The FlashLink Real-Time In-Transit Logger monitors and reports temperature, humidity, light, shock and location during transport, and is especially important for tracking products sensitive to humidity.

A cloud-based service shows real time route information and conditions in a shipping container or truck. The light sensor provides added security by sending alerts which could indicate load tampering or arrival inspections. A shock sensor records when excessive physical force is detected. The RTL Prime 3G offer the benefits of a 2-in-1 logger with real-time reporting and a PDF backup when there's no cellular service available. This reliable single-use data logger sends trip data at regular intervals to a cloud application

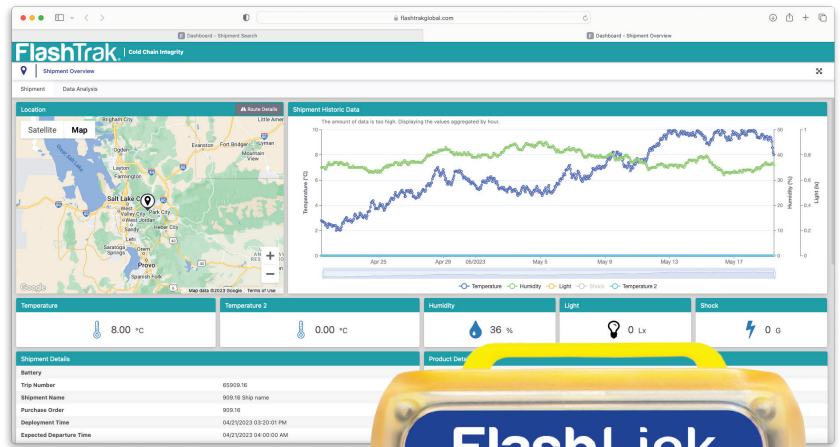
where it's always available. The onboard PDF backup for trip reports and Flight Mode feature gives shippers the leading edge for tracking shipments. The user-friendly online dashboard makes data available to shippers 24/7, even before a shipment reaches the receiving dock

**Results:** Using the real-time loggers helped to show Kirk that the temperature in the trucks shipping the cherries was not consistent for the entire trip.

With the ability to track the shipment, the Kirk discovered they could actually get the fruit to its destination at the right temperature if they made a few changes. Kirk surmised, "If the doors of the truck are kept closed and the truck stays cold, we can get our fruit there cold."

They've been using the real-time loggers in a few ways. They use the loggers for their own shipments, and they provide to their clients. In addition to monitoring the cherries going from Central Otago to Auckland, Kirk uses them in the field every day to check the temperature, as a way to protect the fruit from frost. Using the real-time logger online dashboard, she can see when the temperature in the field drops and when it goes back up. It's another way to see what's happening with the crop. One of the growers Kirk consults with uses the RTL for their apple containers.

In terms of the real-time logger's functionality, Kirk believes it works well. Says Kirk, "It's easy to start; it's easy to find it online. It's very convenient." Sharon's favorite feature is that she can just jump in any time of the day and see the temperature online.



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