

By TOMRA Fresh Food

TOMRA's Fresh Food business area, the leading provider of post-harvest solutions and services to the global fresh produce industry using the world's most advanced grading technology, has announced that it is now operating from its Field Research Centre in Waikato, New Zealand.

The move will further improve TOMRA Fresh Food's category focus on customer centricity by providing a site where all aspects of the development cycle from Fruit Science through to manufacturing are in close proximity.

The Fruit Science program provides value add, fruit-focused solution development. This will allow for more in depth understanding of our categories and allow for newly designed equipment to be tried, tested and developed with the help of practical in field experience.

Geoff Furniss, the company's CEO, says he brings with him a "determination to continue pushing the limitations of agritech innovation and further extend the TOMRA Fresh Food offering".



"The success of TOMRA Fresh Food includes a fully aligned development team delivering highly valued products to the industry in the categories we serve," Furniss says. "This includes utilising the skillsets and expertise across the entire TOMRA Fresh team to get closer to our customers through aligned service and sales offerings."

By integrating the expertise of Compac and BBC Technologies through the formation of

TOMRA Fresh Food, the business provides innovative packhouse solutions for fresh produce industries such as apples, citrus, avocados, tomatoes, kiwifruit, cherries and blueberries.

Due to the maritime influence playing with the geography of New Zealand, there are a vast array of climates and conditions within a small area. The Waikato District has an amazing climate for agriculture supporting a wide diversity of crops from all kinds of berries, apples, potatoes, kiwifruit and maize.

The Field Research Centre is at an intersection between Sub-Tropical and Temperate climates, but with sufficient chill to grow conventional crops like apples and cherries. The near-by Bay of Plenty region supports New Zealand's largest plantings of avocados and kiwifruit, making use of the warming influence of the Pacific Ocean to let these subtropical crops thrive. All of this diversity puts us in a fantastic position to have access to a wide range of commercial partners to build lasting relationships with.

The Field Research Centre includes test orchards, a production design facility, cool storage and facility for full test simulations of packing lines and testing new integrated solutions with these lines, space for engineering, electronics, software design, fruit-science test labs as well as space for scale and growth for TOMRA Fresh Food's research and development program.



The two level building hosts 3300 square metres of factory and 1800 square metres in office and R&D space. At peak capacity it hosts 280 employees.

Collaborative spaces were included in the building's design with potential for additional like-minded enterprises to be hosted at the site in order to facilitate information sharing and idea creation.

The site also includes two hectares for field research which will be developed for horticultural test orchards. By growing the same crops as its customers, TOMRA Fresh Food will build an even more intimate understanding from field through packhouse.

Centralisation of focused science, research, development and manufacturing has many benefits. To name a few, it promotes knowledge sharing, builds critical mass, accelerates

gains from shared learning, combines resources and equipment, facilitates effective communication, provides a value add showcase site for customers, and deepens knowledge of the value chains for each core category.



TOMRA Fresh Food's development team will work directly alongside our Fruit Science Program to test and improve solutions prior to producing them on site and in which the assembly teams can provide direct feedback to development to close the feedback loop.

“This is where the process starts and where we have the space to sort out any problems, inventions, brainstorming and creating so we get to the stage where we have solutions our customers truly value,” Furniss adds.



TOMRA Fresh Food has 17 global offices with manufacturing in New Zealand, Europe, and China.

For more information please write to: tff-sales@tomra.com