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Oppy's grape category techs up in California



Bloomfield Robotics' AI image capture technology

The company is trialling a range of innovative technologies to advance its California table grape business

Oppy, the Vancouver-based fresh produce grower and marketer, has teamed up with some of the sector's most innovative tech companies to improve its California table grape offer.

It recently partnered with Bloomfield Robotics to trial its deep learning AI and ground-based image capture that detects and measures phenotypes automatically in a bid to improve its forecasting and yield management.

Oppy has also reported promising results of a trial with a harvest cart developed by Vinery, which it said could cut labour costs thanks to its increased capacity and more secure trek. This autumn, it plans to test an autonomous version of the harvest cart.

In post-harvest, Oppy is running a pilot of Hazel Technologies' Hazel 100 grape sachets that it hopes will extend the storage life of its grapes under transit and warehouse conditions while

achieving greener and more turgid stems and reducing the presence of shrivelled fruit.

"We are precise and strategic in the opportunities we take on," said Garland Perkin's, Oppy's senior manager of insights and innovation.

"They won't all be successes, that's just the nature of innovation. Which is why we are intentional in what we pursue, only investing in solutions that have a likelihood of high ROI with a keen focus on improving products, creating efficiencies and mitigating issues."

Oppy's director of domestic grapes and sales manager Marc Serpa said advances in yield forecasting, labour efficiency and shelf-life extension would enable it to achieve more consistency of supply in its primary grape brand, Ocean Spray.

"Having gone from shipping our first pack of grapes in the iconic Ocean Spray brand just last year to announcing our

12-month programme at the beginning of 2021, this really shows how Oppy is adding value to the category," he said.

"It is a very progressive category. We're always looking for opportunities to ensure that our grapes have distinct characteristics like enhanced flavour, consistency, ease of production and shelf life for our retailers.

"That's why pursuing these innovative solutions, working with all major varietal development pioneers and having year-round availability is essential to growing into the next stage of our business and why Oppy is the ideal grape shipper for retail partners looking for a one-stop-shop."

Oppy grapes are available year-round from Peru, Chile, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico and California.

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