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Unitec bolsters blueberry packhouse



California-based Family Tree Farms has installed two new Unitec blueberry lines

Family Tree Farms, a US-based grower-packer-shipper, has installed new Unitec blueberries lines, equipped with the Blueberry Vision 3 system.

Having already installed one Unitec blueberry line in 2018, the company has increased its capacity with two new lines in 2020.

Daniel Jackson, owner of Family Tree Farms, said the addition of these lines would provide an advantage during challenging seasons.

"In the years passed when we had to sort conventionally, with human eyes, there was so much more room for error," Jackson said.

"When we had a heatwave or a rain event, we saw our quality go down and at times we would have to stop, stop picking, but thanks to the Unitec lines we were able to continue picking, to sort out that bad product and the result is a product of great eating quality, a great experience blueberry that we can give to our customer and be proud of."

Challenges are not just related to weather either as the Covid-19 pandemic has shown.

With this technology Family Tree Farms said it has only had to employ around 11 people to handle blueberries on the line, compared to 85 people who should have been employed if they had used the traditional way.