



By Chris Komorek

Wednesday 29th April 2020, 6:50 GMT

T&G charter shipment to Europe



Approximately 31m New Zealand grown apples shipped to Antwerp as growers feel impact of coronavirus

New Zealand producer-exporter, T&G Global, has chartered a shipment to transport approximately 31m New Zealand-grown apples to Antwerp, Belgium, as a way around potential container shortages and port closures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a statement, T&G announced it was currently loading the Baltic Spring with the last apples from Hawke's Bay at Napier Port, after a last-ditch packing effort over the weekend.

Craig Betty, director of operations for T&G Global, said it was risky to rely completely on the regular shipping programme, given the current situation relating to the pandemic.

"We needed to do everything possible to support our growers and get their fruit to markets in Europe," said Betty.

"So, we pulled out all the stops. We have 5,400 pallets going on the Baltic Spring, most of it is JAZZ, Braeburn and Pink Lady apples.

"The uncertainty in the supply chain due to COVID-19 made us re-think alternatives to ensure customers in Europe receive our produce," he added.

Betty highlighted the situation in China, where ports and associated feeder ports were congested, as justification for the move.

He cited the uncertainty surrounding a potential labour shortage in Europe, suggesting it could lead to refrigerated container plugs reaching capacity at a critical time for the company's apple exports.

"It's been a huge effort that's come together over the last six weeks. We've had team members from our European and New Zealand business working together, including 13 pack houses in Nelson and Hawke's Bay. That gives you a good idea about the sheer quantity of apples we're talking about," said Betty.

T&G said its team worked with pack houses, cool stores, the shipping line, insurers, ports, stevedores and transport partners to

"Even though we've gone to Level 3 today, the vessel is loading right now under a Level 4 operating structure which the transport company, stevedores and crew must follow," noted Betty.

"From a T&G perspective, we were very privileged to be able to operate as an essential business under Level 4, and we're maintaining those same COVID-19 safe work practices throughout Level 3," he added.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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