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**Perla Fruit gets off to a flying start in its first cherry season
with Compac InVision² sorting technology**

Auckland, New Zealand, 15 July 2020 – *Established in June 2019, Turkish packer and exporter Perla Fruit is well on the way to completing successfully its first cherry season. This result is all the more remarkable for having been achieved at a time when the world was rocked by the Covid-19 pandemic. This positive outcome is down in great part to the extensive experience and dynamism of President Kerim Taner and General Manager Murat Hamdi Taner, who steered the company through the many hurdles of this first year of activity. One of their decisions, which was critical to this success, was the choice of Compac as a partner for its automated sorting technology. Compac, part of the TOMRA Food family, its distributor ICOEL and Turkish agent Sardas pulled out all the stops to overcome the unprecedented situation of travel restrictions and lockdowns, and completed the on-time installation of a new turnkey cherry grading and packing line equipped with Compac InVision² electronic grading platform. The system was up and running for the beginning of the cherry season and is delivering on its promise of excellent grading accuracy and outstanding defect and color selection. Perla Fruit fully expects to close its first season with a result that will place the company among the top cherry packers and exporters in Turkey.*

When they established Perla Fruit in June 2019, President Kerim Taner and General Manager Murat Hamdi Taner knew that they needed to hit the ground running if they were to be ready for the beginning of their first cherry season in April 2020. They very quickly made the strategic decision to choose Compac's automated sorting technology for their new plant and wasted no time in contacting Mustafa Sakarya, Senior Director of Sardas, Compac agent in Turkey.

"It was our first season, so it was critical that we deliver on our promise to growers, to customers and to our team," explains Hamdi Taner. "We had limited time to make all the preparations, and one of the most important elements was the sorting machine. One reason for choosing Compac was the technology, but more important was the fact that we felt safe working with Compac. I have known Mustafa and Roberto [Ricci, Compac Regional Director EMENA] for many years, and I knew we could trust them and be 100% sure that they would support us. I knew we would have the machine on time and that it would be ready to start for the season. This is the main reason why we wanted to work with Compac – and we made the right decision!"

Perla Fruit is a young company with a rich heritage brought by the founding family, which has a long history in the fresh produce sector and is recognized as one of the country's pioneers of the Turkish cherry market. Kerim and Hamdi Taner have brought to the company their extensive experience and entrepreneurial approach. They know how to read the world markets and how to meet the very specific requirements of a wide variety of customers: "In our first season, we made the most of openings in the UK, German and Scandinavian markets, explains Kerim Taner. "We also export by air to Far Eastern and Middle Eastern markets, such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Dubai, Bahrein and Qatar. We serve a wide variety of customers, each with very specific requirements."

In order to meet these demands and deliver on their promise of consistently high quality, Perla Fruit turned to Compac for a reliable complete turnkey solution: "We wanted the most advanced technology for accurate grading and gentle handling, and a high packing capacity above 10 tonnes/hour," says Kerim Taner. "The quality of service support that Compac offer was also a key deciding factor in our choice."

A tailor-made solution to meet the specific requirements of Perla Fruit

Compac worked closely with its partners ICOEL and Sardas to identify the best solution and design a customized layout to fit the dimensions of the packhouse. The teams conducted multiple site visits and discussed the options in detail with the Perla Fruit team. The solution offered by Compac as a result of this analysis is a full Compac InVision² grading system and 16L Small Fruit Sorter (SFS) with 27 packing outlets.

The Compac Small Fruit Sorter singulates the fruit onto lanes where every individual fruit is rotated under the InVision² cameras, which take more than 70 photos of each cherry to grade color, softness and quality. The cherries are then distributed to flumes that convey them to manual grading tables and then ICOEL box fillers. Throughout the packing process quality control staff are continuously checking the quality of the fruit being packed and adjusting the system's settings to ensure the cherries meet the specific requirements of the customers. A final quality check is conducted on the boxes before they are palletized and placed in cold storage until they are loaded for shipping.

Accurate and consistent grading for size, shape, color and blemishes

The InVision² platform achieves extremely accurate and consistent grading for size, shape, color and blemishes through a combination of powerful imaging using color and infrared technologies, controlled lighting and cherry rotation. "This is very important for us," explains Hamdi Taner, "because some days we pack for 10 different customers, 15 different types of packaging, different colors, different sizes – even different customer specifications, as some have zero tolerance while for others it can be 3% or 5%. This machine allows us to make all kinds of combinations."

Setting up the machine to deliver the desired results and ensuring that Perla Fruit knew how to make the adjustments to achieve the optimal performance was a key part of the process, which required a close collaboration. Mustafa Sakarya explains: "We are the experts on how to adjust the software of the machine, but it is very important to have a customer who knows what they want. The machine can do everything, but you have to define it and set up the machine correctly." Mustafa provided all the support Perla Fruit needed to get the most of the InVision² platform to their full satisfaction: "We are packing for the domestic market, export, premium quality, and the machine does what we say. We have good results and the finished products quality is fully satisfying," says Hamdi Taner.

Roberto Ricci adds: "The InVision² platform has enabled Perla Fruit to establish new relationships with quality-focused retailers, whose standards would have been very difficult to achieve without it. The high color and size grading accuracy means that they can separate their fruit in many more ways, customizing their product to meet very specific requirements and improve their margins. In addition, the system's capacity to remove soft fruit has enabled them to separate cherries with longer shelf life, opening new business opportunities with retailers further away."

The Compac system is also meeting Perla Fruit's capacity requirements: "We are packing on average 9 to 10 tonnes per hour, and with a homogeneous distribution we can pack 11 or 12 tonnes. When we are packing these volumes and the quality of the finished product doesn't change, this is also very important. When we push the machine for volume, it is able to take it. This is a good advantage!"

The Compac system has also enabled Perla Fruit to redeploy its 250-strong workforce efficiently to address the issue of labor shortage, as the selection lines only require one worker on each side instead of the high number of workers needed on the selection conveyor of a manual line. This has resulted in an 80% reduction in manual grading labor which provided two major benefits this season: exponential benefits when the fruit quality is low but

the machine can still pack at full capacity, and making it easier for Perla Fruit to meet the social distancing demands due to Covid-19.

Off to a good start with Compac and looking at new opportunities for the future

The cherry season is still ongoing, and as it progresses the Compac sorting system is able to adapt to the changing requirements, as Hamdi Taner explains: “We started the season with rain, so cracking has been one of the biggest issues at the beginning, especially in the earlier regions. Now we are in the main production regions, and softness is becoming the main problem, so we need to adjust the machine carefully.”

In this first part of the season, the Compac InVision² is delivering on its promise: “Accuracy and color selection are perfect; defect selection is also very good. We haven’t had any rejections or claims because of quality,” adds Hamdi Taner. “We are packing about 120 tonnes a day in two shifts, and we are planning to increase to 150 tonnes a day by extending the working hours. It is our first year, and we expect to export more than 4,000 tonnes for the full season. We are very satisfied with Compac. I am happy to have this Compac machine.”

Kerim and Hamdi Taner are already thinking ahead about opportunities to enter new markets in the coming seasons, taking advantage of the Compac system. “We are looking at China. It is a huge opportunity, but our strategy is to take it slowly because we need to get it right from the start. This market has zero tolerance, they like mostly darker colors, crunchy cherries, and with Compac equipment we can do everything to give them what they want.”

A successful partnership overcomes unprecedented challenges

The achievement of Perla Fruit in its first season is all the more remarkable because it is happening in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that has caused major disruptions across the world. “The travel restrictions and lockdowns started just as Compac was preparing to install the sorting system, raising unprecedented difficulties for the teams involved.

The first issue was getting the machine components on site: “Because of delays, we were missing some parts for the initial installation, and they were difficult to source locally, which made it much more complex,” explains Roberto Ricci.

Hamdi Taner adds: “Personally, I’m a very optimistic person, so I never thought we wouldn’t get the line, but in early March when the Covid-19 issue exploded in Italy we started to become nervous. But Compac did a really good job, we received all the parts on time and started to install in late March. We know that this required a big effort behind the scenes. We discussed all options; we had many brainstorming sessions with Mustafa and the Compac team about this.”

Travel restrictions also meant that Compac and ICOEL staff were unable to be on site for the installation and start-up. “We addressed this successfully with remote virtual support,” explains Roberto Ricci. The Sardas team played a key role, as they were the only ones on site. Mustafa Sakarya explains: “We had an excellent collaboration with Perla Fruit. They obtained the authorization from the local authorities for the Sardas team to stay at the plant during lockdown. Perla Fruit made all the necessary arrangements at the facility so they could be on site and continue with the installation.”

Hamdi Taner adds: “We are lucky because Sardas is a very good team. They worked here day and night, and I would like to thank Mustafa and his team and the ICOEL and Compac teams because they really made miracles.”

About Compac

Compac provides integrated post-harvest solutions and services to the global fresh produce industry using the world's most advanced grading technology. Combining industry-leading solutions with award-winning grading platforms like Spectrim, the company's mission is to enable its customers to improve returns, gain operational efficiencies, and ensure a safe food supply via smart, usable technologies. To achieve this, Compac operates centers of excellence, regional offices and manufacturing locations within the United States, Europe, South America, Asia, Africa and Australasia.

For further information about Compac, please see www.compacsort.com.

Compac is a member of the TOMRA Group that was founded on an innovation in 1972 that began with the design, manufacture and sale of reverse vending machines (RVMS) for automated collection of used beverage containers. Today TOMRA provides technology-led solutions that enable the circular economy with advanced collection and sorting systems that optimize resource recovery and minimize waste in the food, recycling and mining industries.

TOMRA has more than ~100,000 installations in over 80 markets worldwide and had total revenues of ~ 9.3 billion NOK in 2019. The Group employs ~4,500 globally and is publicly listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange (OSE: TOM). For further information about TOMRA, please see www.tomra.com

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