



Weighing at the Speed of lights

Weighing is seldom 'front of mind' unless it is accompanied with that angry morning stare at the bathroom scales. It is however one of the most fundamental metrics at the core of manufacturing processes; particularly in the packaged food and fresh produce sectors.

With escalating costs, and downward pressure on product prices, growers are continually on the lookout for simple ways to increase productivity. Fresh produce relies heavily on manual packing processes, often utilising casual labour to pack into punnets/boxes/bags ready for supermarket consumers.

Labour is typically the biggest cost to a business, but there is another that can go unmeasured – the cost of extra produce given away in overfilled packs. This can add up to thousands of dollars per week if unchecked.

An **emerging trend** among southeast Queensland strawberry growers this season has shown how looking at weights in a different light (or lights in this case) can lead to **substantial savings**.

People respond to signals with far less thought process than looking at numbers. Green means 'GO', Red means 'NO'. It is part of everyday life, transcending language and cultural communication barriers.

By utilising packing scales that have a target based signal system, packing staff and management alike enjoy immediate benefits; stringent fill targets can be set for both upper and lower weight bands. Packing staff are able to **quickly fill** and check that **products are correct**, and the increased visibility of red/green lights means management can easily **oversee performance**.

Braetop Berries near Queensland's Glasshouse Mountains were staggered to find that re-checking several cartons of traditionally packed punnets, produced several extra punnets of fruit when using traffic light scales.

This is **"money in the bank"** according to father and son team Peter and Aiden Young.

With **supermarkets pushing** for more pre-packed fresh produce in

Australia, there is growing move towards pre-packed produce in many categories.

Terence Roy, a berry farmer from Coolhaven Farms cites improved packing speed as another instant benefit.



This **technology is not confined to the packing shed**. Many growers are increasing packing speeds and reducing giveaways by using larger capacity scales to pack in the field as well.

Scales with target-based outputs like traffic lights have been around for a long time - typically in more sophisticated and costly models for automated processes. Recently this type of feature has been added to lower cost packing scales, making it a viable option for packing sheds that often have dozens of scales.

Many modern scales have the capability to send outputs to lights or buzzers although a lot of users may not realise this functionality exists. It's worth checking with your local scale supplier to see if your scales already have this type of output.

Green means 'GO'
Red means 'NO'

Rather than focussing on a numeric weight display, packers have utilised **traffic light signals** on their packing scales to **improve product yields** with some **staggering results**. This simple idea has two immediate benefits: **reduce over-filled packs and increase packer speeds**.

"Our packers work more efficiently since using the light signals on our new A&D scales. It's made significant improvements to our productivity in both speed and reduced re-work of out of spec punnets"

Terence Roy, Coolhaven Farms



SJ-WP SCALES

SJ-3000WP	SJ-6000WP	SJ-15KWP	SJ-30KWP
3000g x 0.5g	6000g x 1g	15kg x 2g	30kg x 5g
Hi-Res 0.1g	Hi-Res 0.2g	Hi-Res 0.5g	Hi-Res 1g

[VIEW THE SJ-WP PRODUCT PAGE HERE](#)