

Australian Bananas



Australian
Banana
Growers

ISSUE 67 | APRIL 2023

Big laughs, bright ideas

**Recharge
and rethink
at Congress**



Research proving golden

PAGES 10-13

A breakdown on biologicals

PAGE 24

Funding for BMP future

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Australian Banana Industry Congress

17 - 19 May 2023
Cairns Convention Centre



bananacongress.org.au



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Front page: Comedian Jimcain will set the scene for Congress 2023, when he kicks off the plenary program in Cairns on 18 May.



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MODERN MONITORING TECHNOLOGIES FOR IMPROVING SUPPLY CHAIN PERFORMANCE

By John Archer, Minh Nguyen, Andrew Macnish and Shanara Veivers, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Bananas are a favourite fruit of Australians with over 5 million consumed a day.¹

Given that 94% of the national crop is produced in Far North Queensland, a lot of bananas travel the length and breadth of the country.² Transport temperatures above and below the recommended 13-14°C and extended storage duration can negatively impact fruit quality and increase the risk of consignment rejection. Peel colour development and expression of rots accelerates with elevated postharvest handling temperatures. Chilling injury is associated with low storage temperatures. Monitoring fruit temperatures from farm to retail is critical for identifying opportunities to improve practice towards delivering consistent product quality.

Real-time monitoring

Over the past 5 years, a new generation of real-time temperature and location monitoring dataloggers have entered the market, providing low-cost autonomous reporting. Gone are the days trying to retrieve manual download loggers from consignments; real-time monitoring technologies livestream data to dedicated apps and web portals. The loggers include sensors for recording air and pulp temperature, relative humidity and shock.

Real-time loggers use GPS, cellular and/or Wi-Fi to provide accurate tracking data. Some loggers have the capacity to send e-mail or SMS notifications and alerts should shipment conditions breach setpoints. These loggers can help pinpoint when and where consignment handling conditions deviate from best practice, establishing greater accountability along the supply chain. This can encourage growers and supply chain partners to work collaboratively to identify and manage potential risks of fruit quality loss and waste. Food waste is a very serious issue and impacts the entire world. By reducing food waste, financial and environmental impacts can be improved while energy and resources are conserved.



Figure 1. Bananas with a real-time logger.

A typical domestic shipment

As part of a research project that aims to improve supply chain performance and reduce banana quality loss and waste, we monitored 35 random consignments using real-time loggers. We observed fruit leaving north Queensland packing houses at 16-28°C in all monitored consignments, well above the recommended range. Road transport temperatures to Brisbane and Sydney varied between 12°C and 16°C. During consolidation at the markets before or after gas ripening, the temperature of 25% of monitored shipments dropped lower than 12°C for >24 hours. This was associated with the development of fruit chilling injury, resulting in economic loss and physical waste. Real-time loggers, costing less than \$80 each, removed the mystery of where this happened in the supply chain and highlighted opportunities to prioritise corrective action.

Frank Sciacca from Pacific Coast Eco Bananas recently trialled multiple real-time monitoring technologies and said, "You are getting the information you want and real-time loggers are a very good tool that we need, if you're not collecting the information how do you know to improve?"

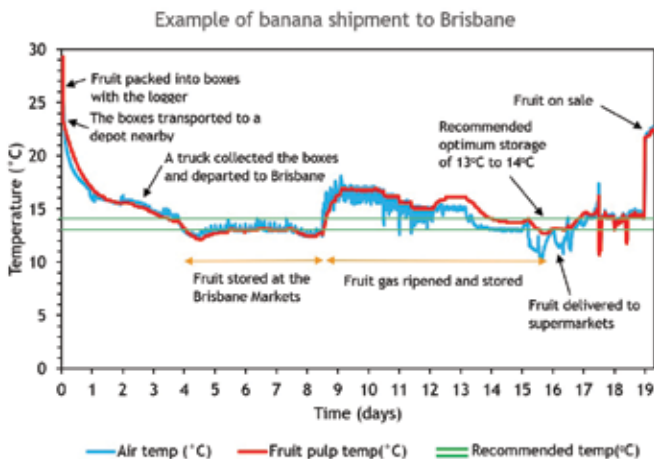


Figure 2. Example of monitored temperatures in a banana consignment from Innisfail to Brisbane.

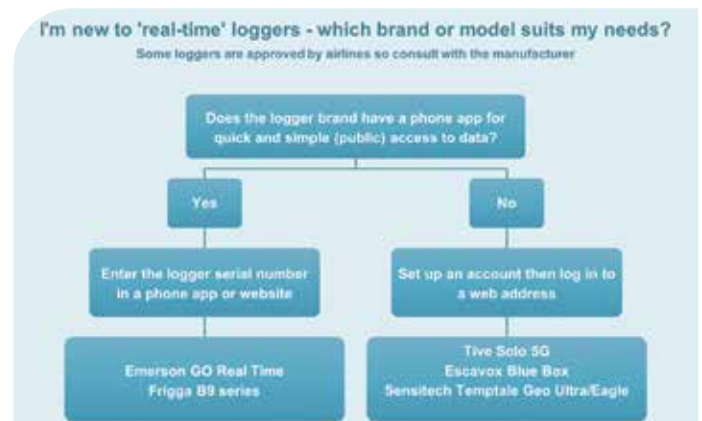


Figure 3. Example of monitored temperatures in a banana consignment from Innisfail to Brisbane.

For further information, contact John Archer from the DAF Supply Chain Innovation team on (07) 4241 8231, John.Archer@daf.qld.gov.au or see temperature monitoring technologies on <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/plants/supply-chain-innovation>

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1 Hort Innovation Australia (2022). "Australian Horticulture Statistics Handbook" <https://www.horticulture.com.au/growers/help-your-business-grow/research-reports-publications-fact-sheets-and-more/grower-resources/mt21006-assets/australian-horticulture-statistics-handbook/>

2 Hort Innovation Australia (2023). "Mind bending facts": Australian Bananas. <https://australianbananas.com.au/Pages/all-about-bananas/mind-bending-facts>