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- Hectre are bringing clever simplicity to the US orchard industry, delivering gains to fruit farmers
- The popular NZ fruit tech company were named winners in the global AgTech BreakThrough Awards and are now double finalists in another prestigious awards program
- Take a look under the hood of this Kiwi success story and find out what makes them shine

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, April 5, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- For many businesses, 2021 was a wild ride, but despite the challenges, some companies shone. Popular NZ fruit tech company Hectre (pronounced Hectare) was a definite sparkler, winning at the global AgTech BreakThrough Awards and gaining a reputation for best in class among the US apple growing industry.



It's time to take a look under the hood to discover how this innovative company, built with buckets of "Kiwi" work ethic and a huge passion to deliver "better", has gone on to become one of the most exciting agritech companies on the global stage.

Last week, and perhaps unsurprisingly, Hectre were named finalists in two categories at the prestigious NZ Hi-Tech Awards. How did they arrive at this point?

It all started with an apple. It was 2016 and Hectre was a team of three visionary co-founders, who upon learning of the daily struggles faced by apple

growers, set out to find a better way. In consultation with a group of growers, they created the design for the Hectre Orchard Management App and importantly, growers backed them.

Simon Easton, co-owner of Wairepo Orchards, grows apples near Nelson, in NZ's South Island, and still remembers when one of the founders, Menilik Dyer, turned up at his orchard with a large notebook and asked, "As a grower, what is it that you need that we could help with?" Easton was sick to death of writing out bin tickets - the labels that must go with each full fruit bin detailing the immense amount of origin data that growers have to capture (it's even greater now).

Easton is a numbers man and is driven by continually improving the performance of his orchard. He wants to get his hands on data so he can hone in on what's working well and identify opportunities to perform even better. He's enjoyed seeing the journey of the Hectre app from those early days to where it is now. "Being able to get cost info out of Hectre is awesome. To know that picking cost me this amount and pruning cost me that amount...I just love all of that."

"We've always been keen to roll up our sleeves, get alongside growers and learn everything we can from them. I think they respect the fact that we genuinely value their insights, their skills and their extraordinary commitment to what has to be one of the hardest industries to be in. When you consider that fruit growers only get one chance each year to make money (after harvest), and the rest of the time they're slogging their guts out and pouring in funds. It takes bravery and an immense amount of care and hard work to survive and thrive. Our team is continually in awe of the growers we work with," says Hectre Co-founder and CEO, Matty Blomfield.

In the first few years, Hectre built out the [Hectre Orchard Management App](#), an app that enables fruit growers to digitise their orchards, removing all the double and triple handling of paper they traditionally deal with and the wasted time that goes with it. Growers can manage all their labour through the app, including auto calculation of piece rates, plus integration with payroll programs. The ability to gain insights on the performance of pickers and fruit quality, delivers direct benefits as growers continue to battle the challenges rising from the pandemic and environmental factors.

Those early relationships formed with NZ fruit growers, led to invaluable introductions to growers in one of the world's apple growing meccas, Washington, USA. "I remember one of our first US trips. We had recognised how important it was to have boots on the ground. So, with no appointments in place, we booked a flight to the US and then glued ourselves to the phone, calling up every grower we could and telling them we'd be in their area next week and could we meet," reflects Blomfield.

The app now covers numerous fruit types such as apples, pears, high value cherries, kiwifruit and more. And the Hectre app is currently being used by fruit growers and packers in 11 countries, including US industry giants Washington Fruit & Produce and Borton Fruit.

"The platform and tools they've built support fruit growers of all sizes, from small family farms, to large integrated global fruit institutions. We believe Hectre's dedication to constant innovation provides a significant competitive advantage and aligns well with our own approach to business," says Byron Borton, Chief Visionary Officer at Borton Fruit.

Hectre's innovation approach has centred on what they term, "clever simplicity". Creating leading edge tech for fruit growers and packers, with user simplicity at the forefront. Kylie Hall, Marketing Manager at Hectre, says that focus on clever simplicity has created a unique market advantage and one Hectre has become known for. "We recognise that it's not enough to just create awesome technology. We've got to be fully focused on who will be using that tech and how we can make it as simple as possible. That way, users can learn quickly, and our customers can optimise their tech investment, gaining full benefit from their spend."

In Waterport, New York, Lamont Fruit Farms are using Hectre's Orchard Management App. CEO Jason Woodworth says the insights are excellent. "Hectre is now the tool we use to evaluate all of our blocks in the true sense of real time. You can track each and every project and monitor costs from the start of pruning until the end of harvest. The staff are fantastic with support and are always thinking forward."

Two years ago, Hectre launched [Spectre for Apples](#), a computer vision AI app that helps fruit growers and packers assess the size of their fruit, from the very first pick. In an industry where size really does matter, it's a crucial piece of

information, enabling improved decision-making regarding storage and packing, and empowering growers and packers to secure sales orders earlier than ever before.

Spectre works straight off an iPad or iPhone and serves up sizing information within seconds. Users simply take a photo on their iPad and Spectre will detect and size more than 100 pieces of fruit from the fruit bin. Mobile, fast and simple. "We've since developed Spectre models to meet the needs of citrus packers too and are working with pilot customers this US harvest for Spectre for Cherries," notes Hectre R&D Manager, Luke Butters. The pilot was quickly oversubscribed.

The upcoming US apple harvest will see yet another leading-edge innovation delivered by Hectre, this time focused on providing insights for huge US apple packhouses. It will be another world first piece of fruit tech, developed by a Kiwi company shining brightly. "We'll share more about that later," grins Butters.

Today, Hectre now has the collective talents of a team of 34, spread across NZ, the US and Vietnam. "Our tech is delivering huge benefits for both growers and packers, but it's our people that really make the difference. Our people uncover the needs. They build our tech. They help growers learn our tech and they support the success of our customers. Each of them is humble, caring, hard working and hugely supportive of each other. They are our secret ingredient, and we value them highly," adds Hall.

David Downs, Chair of the NZ Hi-Tech Trust which organises the NZ Hi-Tech Awards program, says the standard of entries continues to grow each year. "This year's finalists span the full spectrum of the hi-tech sector, and the level of innovative tech products and solutions continues to astound us all." Hectre has been named a finalist for both the Most Innovative Hi-Tech Agritech Solution and for Hi-Tech StartUp Company of the Year.

About Hectre

Hectre is an award winning startup empowering fruit growers and packers with the world's simplest to use orchard technologies. Originating in New Zealand, with teams in the US, NZ and Vietnam, Hectre creates simple to use, leading edge orchard management and mobile fruit sizing apps. With the

Hectre app fruit growers can digitise their orchard management processes, saving time and money, and getting more of their fruit to market, enhancing their financial sustainability. Fruit packers can increase their early size sample rates by up to 3000%, gaining access to sizing data as soon as the fruit is picked, enabling better decision making, reduced costs and achieving greater sales. To learn more about Hectre, please visit www.hectre.com

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