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Optimism as New Zealand apple, pear harvest approaches

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The New Zealand apple and pear season is approaching harvest, and growers have good reasons to be positive and optimistic, according to [Vanguard International](#).

The 2021 season will certainly be remembered as a most challenging one, as it was for most of the global produce industry with the many transportation disruptions and market closures due to Covid-19. As the New Zealand team moves closer to the start of harvest for 2022, the outlook and projections are positive and exciting. The overall growing season was very good with no major inclement events that could compromise the quality and condition of the fruit. The company expects great quality and condition to be the theme of the 2022 New Zealand apple and pear season.

The spring was hotter than normal with fair amounts of rains to counter any of the potential negative effects of the heat. Recent weather has been hot and dry, but starting mid-January, the company saw milder weather and rain that should allow trees to catch a break from the heat, stabilize and recuperate.

Sizing is expected to be one size larger than in 2021 across all varieties.

Official numbers are not yet released, but the industry should have no issues achieving 23 million cartons of apples packed in 2022.

The labor situation has certainly improved since 2021. While there is still a shortage of seasonal workers that are relied upon for harvest labor, temporary workers coming from neighboring islands have managed to fill this gap. Labor costs have increased by approximately 10 percent. Cost for freight has increased and customers should expect to pay between \$1.50 to \$3 per carton more in 2022 than last year.

The outlook regarding transportation is also favorable as the company does not foresee the same grave challenges this year that were faced last year.

Pear harvest is scheduled to start during week 4 and apples weeks 6-7. Most packers will start running Galas during week 8, but with peak volumes around week 9-10 depending on further developments in the orchards.

Aside from the increased costs, the overall outlook for 2022 is very positive. The company is eagerly watching market behavior, demand patterns, vessel schedules, container availability and the constantly changing Covid environment.

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