



vineland
RESEARCH & INNOVATION CENTRE

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Mini-Cuke Packer - A Vineland Innovation

Vineland's new mini-cuke packer made its debut at the 2017 Canadian Greenhouse Conference.

"The demonstrations were successful in attracting visitors to our booth," said Darren Ward, Vineland's Manager, Business and Commercialization. "Several showed an interest in the technology including potential buyers."

Leamington-based AMCO Produce, which packages its Select One line of mini cucumbers, will take possession of the first edition of the packer in early 2018.

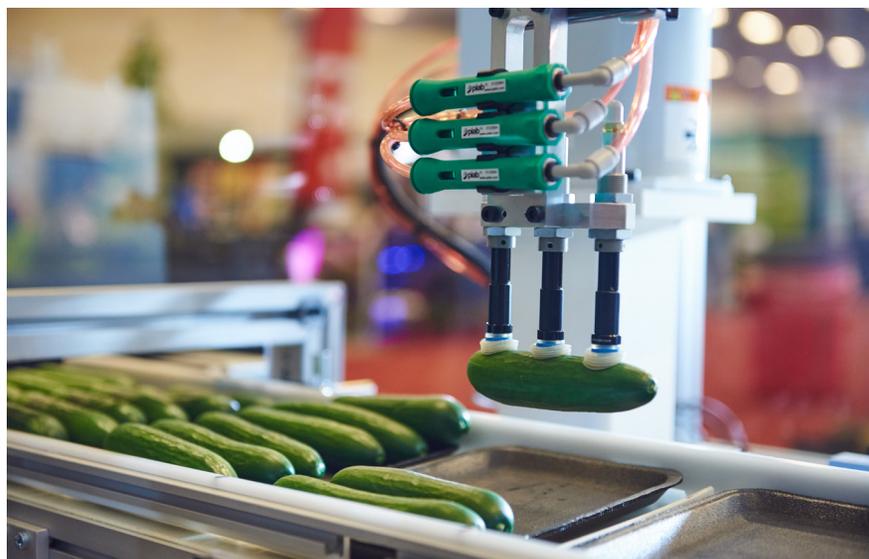
Vineland has partnered with CMP Automation from Ayr, ON to build a machine that can grade, align and

pack 300 mini cucumbers on a tray per hour, roughly twice as fast as the method currently used in many greenhouses.

The packer uses a series of conveyors, a speedy pick-and-place robot and optical sorting to grade cucumbers by size and shape and then arranges them on a tray before being wrapped in cellophane and shipped to grocery stores.

Vineland's new technology is designed to help growers improve productivity and competitiveness.

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The Vineland-designed, CMP-built mini-cuke packer.



Cider Profiles and Consumer Preference

Seven million litres of local craft cider flowing into the market by 2020 is a tall order and one Vineland Research and Innovation Centre's (Vineland) research team is working to ensure becomes a reality.

The work is based on the cider research and innovation strategy developed in partnership with the Ontario Craft Cider Association and the Ontario Apple Growers in 2016 and serves as a roadmap for the fledging industry.

Amy Bowen, PhD, Vineland's Research Director, Consumer Insights, is working to better understand consumer preference drivers of hard apple cider and flavour profiles preferred by consumers to determine how thirsty they are for something more complex.

Utilizing Vineland's trained sensory panel, her research team developed a lexicon of 22 sensory attributes to describe taste, aroma, flavour, mouthfeel and colour of hard apple ciders.



Vineland is working to better understand consumer preference drivers of hard apple cider.

Based on sensory differences, profiles for 50 commercial ciders (including top-selling brands at the LCBO, ranging from imported to domestic and Ontario craft ciders) were grouped into five categories related to taste, mouthfeel and colour attributes.

Consumer preference tastings were completed in October 2017 with 15 ciders from the 50 profiled.

Qualified participants rated liking for each cider, described the cider using a provided list of terms and completed a questionnaire around consumption and purchasing habits.

While the research analysis continues, available results indicate most consumers prefer sweet ciders with specific descriptors including tropical fruit and candy-apple.

Interestingly, two of three top-rated ciders tasted by study participants are not among the top five-selling cider brands at the LCBO.

For more information on the Cider Research and Innovation Strategy, visit vinelandresearch.com and check out media centre/latest reports.

This project was funded in part through *Growing Forward 2 (GF2)*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of *GF2* in Ontario.

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New Table Grape Varieties on the Way

New Canadian fresh grape varieties will expand growers' offerings and fill up shelf space with flavour profiles that meet market demand. The Consumer Insights team at Vineland is working to ensure the new varieties are exactly what consumers are looking for.

In partnership with the Ontario Fresh Grape Growers, Vineland hosted a grower/retailer open house to showcase new scouted varieties on the vine this past September.

The Jupiter grape, developed at the University of Arkansas, was the most appealing by more than 75 per cent of participants. All attendees named Jupiter as the variety with the most commercial potential and commented on its flavour, sweet taste, berry size and shape, as well as colour.

Vineland's Consumer Insights team also completed focus groups on blue and green grapes and found some unique insights including:

- Consumers are receptive to new Ontario varieties even though there is little recognition of the fresh grape industry in Ontario
- Grape varieties are recognized by colour and not by name
- While texture and appearance are important, taste/flavour are key
- Jupiter was picked as the top variety in blue grape focus groups for taste/flavour
- Participants liked the unique, muscat flavour of Jupiter and that it tasted differently from varieties they are accustomed to



Jupiter grapes at Vineland's test block.

- Consumers in general don't look for blue grapes. This perception will need to change and be supported through marketing efforts.

Next steps in this project include using consumer information to develop a commercial name for Jupiter with the goal of introducing to retail by 2022.

This project was funded in part through *Growing Forward 2 (GF2)*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of GF2 in Ontario.

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(A version of this article appeared in the November 2017 issue of the Ontario Fresh Grape Growers' newsletter)



New Directors Appointed to Vineland's Board

Vineland has appointed two new members to its independent Board of Directors.

Kristin Ego-MacPhail

Kristin Ego-MacPhail owns family-run Ego's Nurseries.

Ms. Ego-MacPhail holds a BSc in agriculture from the University of Guelph. She is Director of the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association and Past Chair of Agricultural Adaptation Council.



Kristin Ego-MacPhail

Shelley Martin

Shelley Martin is President and CEO of Nestlé Canada Inc.

She holds a HBBA in marketing from Wilfrid Laurier University. In 2015 Ms. Martin was named a Top 100 award winner for Canada's Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network.



Shelley Martin

Vineland's 13-member Board includes Chair Lyle Vanclief, former Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Vice Chair Warren Jestin, PhD, former Chief Economist at Scotiabank; Karen Belaire, President and CEO, Shared Services West; Paul-André Bosc, President, Château des Charmes; Jim Brandle, PhD, CEO, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre; Greg Devries, President, Truly Green and Cedarline Greenhouses; Kristin Ego-MacPhail, Owner, Ego's Nurseries; Rory Francis, Executive Director, Prince Edward Island BioAlliance; Christy McMullen, Store Manager, Summerhill Market; Shelley Martin, President and CEO, Nestlé Canada Inc.; Ray Price, President, Sunterra Group of Companies; William Stensson, Executive Chairman, Sheridan Nurseries and Allan Visser, President, Visco Holdings Ltd.

Growing the Canadian Berry Market

On November 28, Vineland hosted a workshop exploring opportunities for raspberry and blackberry production. Industry and retail experts Willem vanEldik of Delphy and Peter Chapman of GPS Business led discussions on long cane nursery and fruit production in indoor environment and marketing opportunities in Canada.

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Canadian berry production in indoor environment.