

Multi-Site Packhouse Cuts Reporting Time

A three-site vegetable packer cut weekly reporting time from about 14 hours to 3, and halved stock write-offs, within six months of switching on Pak-Bot.

At a glance	Before Pak-Bot	After 6 months
Admin time on reports (hrs/week)	14	3
Packed stock written off (% of volume)	3.5%	1.6%
New retailer label set-up	2 days	Under 1 hour
Answer to an ad hoc stock question	Next business day	Under 1 minute

The client and the challenge

The client packs potatoes, onions and carrots across three sites, with about 140 staff and a two-person admin office. They supply two national supermarket chains and a range of food service customers.

The business already ran Producepak for inventory, packing and dispatch, but getting answers out of it still depended on a few people:

- **Reports were built by hand.** Every Monday the admin team exported data and assembled sales, stock and yield reports for management, about 14 hours a week between them.
- **Managers waited for answers.** A question like "how much yellow potato do we have at the second site?" went to the office and was usually answered the next day.
- **Old stock was found too late.** Ageing pallets sat behind newer ones in the cool rooms. About 3.5% of packed volume was dumped or sold at a discount each year.
- **New labels were slow.** Each new retailer specification meant up to two days in the label designer before packing could start.

The solution: Pak-Bot inside Producepak

Pak-Bot was switched on for managers, the admin team and site supervisors. Because it is built into Producepak, it works on live data with no exports or sync delay, and site permissions stay in place: each supervisor only sees their own site. How the team uses it day to day:

1. **Plain-English reporting.** Managers type questions such as "Total sales last month by customer" or "Sales by state last month" and get a table or chart in seconds. Regular reports are emailed straight from the chat.
2. **Stock questions from the floor.** Supervisors ask "List the 10 oldest inventory items" or "Total yellow potato in stock" on a phone or tablet, without going through the office.
3. **FIFO guardrail.** When a picker scans a newer pallet while an older one of the same product is still in the cool room, Pak-Bot flags it before the pallet is shipped.
4. **Predictive waste warnings.** Pak-Bot combines stock age with current packing speed to warn managers which lots are at risk of expiring, while there is still time to sell them.
5. **Labels from a spec sheet.** The admin team gives Pak-Bot a retailer's label specification and Producepak generates the label format, instead of building it by hand.

Results

The biggest gain was waste: catching old stock before it expired was worth far more than the admin hours saved.

Benefit	How it was estimated	Annual value
Less stock written off	Write-off fell from 3.5% to 1.6% of about AU\$9.2M packed stock	\$175,000
Admin time saved on reports	11 hrs/week × 52 weeks × AU\$45/hr	\$25,700
Faster label set-up	About 10 new label formats a year, 2 days each down to under an hour	\$7,000
Total		\$207,700

There were also gains that are harder to price. Supervisors now answer their own stock questions, so the office is interrupted less. Managers react the same day when a lot is at risk, rather than finding out in the following week's report.

Why it worked

- **No new system to learn.** Staff ask questions the way they would text a colleague.
- **Live data.** Pak-Bot reads Producepak directly, so a pallet scanned at the dock is in its answers immediately.
- **Prevention, not just reporting.** FIFO checks and expiry warnings stop waste before it happens, instead of explaining it afterwards.

To see what Pak-Bot could do for your packhouse, talk to your Producepak solution consultant.

Sources

- [Pak-Bot chatbot for fresh produce, Farmsoft.com](https://farmsoft.com/pak-bot)
- [Pak-Bot chatbot for fruit and vegetable packers, Producepak.com](https://producepak.com/pak-bot)
- Producepak and Pak-Bot brochures supplied by Producepak