



## UPL Tech Innovation Award: Hectre's innovative tech, a game-changer



New Zealand startup Hectre was presented with the UPL Tech Innovation Award at the 2023 Hort Connections Horticulture Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner, held in Adelaide on Wednesday 7 June.

The UPL Tech Innovation Award is a celebration of individuals or businesses that have implemented technology-focussed innovation from across the Australian or New Zealand fresh produce supply chains.

The award is supported by UPL, a leader in global food systems helping Australian farmers to optimise productivity through innovation and cost effective crop solutions.

Hectre received the award in recognition of an innovative new technology, Spectre Top Down, that enables fruit packers to rapidly receive large amounts of accurate data on fruit sizing as it arrives at the packhouse.

Spectre Top Down combines an overhead camera and AI to detect and determine the size of up to 5,000 pieces of fruit in the back of open-top trucks. As trucks pull up under the camera, Spectre Top Down scans the top layer of fruit and within seconds delivers early fruit size data that is 95% accurate.

The new system has already been adopted by major apple packers in the US, and

application of the technology is now being explored for pears, citrus, cherries, avocados and onions.



“Early access to data on produce sizing can help growers and packhouses to make critical sales, storage and packing decisions. Hectre’s new system gives the industry access to accurate sizing data in a much higher volume and much shorter timescale than was previously possible, avoiding costly packline stoppages and other problems,” said AUSVEG CEO Michael Coote.

“Technology like Hectre’s Spectre Top Down can be a game-changer for the horticulture industry, enabling faster, more efficient operations, and reducing waste and cost.

“Innovative use of technology like this represents the future of horticulture, and I congratulate Hectre on addressing this industry need, and on receiving the UPL Tech Innovation Award.”

Hort Connections 2023 is a joint initiative between AUSVEG and the International Fresh Produce Association of Australia-New Zealand (IFPA A-NZ).