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# SIGNIFICANT FACTORS AFFECTING HORTICULTURAL CORRUGATED FIBREBOARD STRENGTH

## A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

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#### Abstract

The New Zealand kiwifruit and apple industries export the two largest horticultural crops by value and tonnage on long sea routes to distant markets. The long storage and shipping times, low temperature ( $\sim 0^{\circ}$ C) and high humidity (>70 %RH) conditions require boxes manufactured from high performance corrugated fibreboard. As the corrugated fibreboard boxes are a significant expense, improvements to reduce the weight and therefore the cost of the corrugated fibreboard, while maintaining their vertical compression strength, would increase the apple and kiwifruit industries profitability

Through analysis of the literature it was established that the greatest contributor to box compression strength was the corrugated fibreboard edgewise compression strength, which is significantly affected by moisture. The strength of corrugated fibreboard decreases with increasing moisture content, which tends to be high in low-temperature high-humidity cool-stores. The literature also indicated that temperature and moisture content of the fluting medium could be optimised to reduce the damage caused during the fluting process.

The objectives of this study included improving box compression strength predictions by measuring the effect of moisture and temperature on the strength of the corrugated fibreboard and measuring the relationship between temperature, humidity and corrugated fibreboard moisture content. The objectives also included developing a mathematical model to optimise the operations preceding the fluting process by predicting the fluting medium moisture content and temperature just prior to the fluting process.

The measurements of corrugated fibreboard properties enabled the widely known McKee's equation to be modified to enable the prediction of box compression strength over a range of moisture contents (7 to 30 % db), the valves of which could be estimated using the moisture sorption isotherms developed in this study over the temperature and relative humidity range of 0 to 20°C and 40 to 90 % RH.

A mathematical model was developed to predict how the operation of the corrugator would affect the temperature and moisture content of the fluting medium just prior to the fluting process. The model was tested by running the corrugator at normal and extreme settings based on the model's predictions, and measuring the strength properties of the corrugated fibreboard produced. The measured strength properties indicated that the machine speed and steam shower could have an effect but the too were inconsistent to established firm conclusions.

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#### Nomenclature

Α	=	flute constant (dimensions not stated)
A <sub>FM/P</sub>	=	contact area between fluting medium and preconditioner roll $(m^2)$
		$(\mathbf{m})$
AIECS	=	accumulative intrinsic edgewise compression strength (N.m.)
AIECS <sub>Adj</sub>	=	adjusted accumulative intrinsic edgewise compression strength $(N.m^{-1})$
$a_w$	=	sample water activity (dimensionless)
$a_{w1}$	=	water activity of sample at $T_1$ in Kelvin (dimensionless)
$a_{w2}$	=	water activity of sample at $T_2$ in Kelvin (dimensionless)
<b>a</b> <sub>w3</sub>	=	water activity at $TP_3$ (dimensionless)
$a_{w4}$	=	water activity at $TP_4$ (dimensionless)
В	=	box constant (dimensions not stated)
BCS	=	box compression strength (N)
BCS <sub>KL</sub>	=	box compression strength (dimensions not stated)
BP	=	box perimeter (m)
$BP_K$	=	box perimeter (cm)
$BP_{KL}$	=	box perimeter (dimensions not stated)
BS	=	bending stiffness of corrugated fibreboard (Nm)
BSCD	=	corrugated fibreboard cross machine direction (CD) bending
		stiffness (N.m)
BS <sub>HS</sub>	=	ending stiffness of homogeneous strip (Nm)
BS <sub>MD</sub>	=	corrugated fibreboard machine direction (MD) bending
		stiffness (N.m)
$BS_W$	=	bending stiffness (dimensions not stated)
BT	=	box type factor (dimensions not stated)
BW	=	basis weight $(g.m^{-2})$
$b_w$	=	fluting medium basis weight $(kg_{drvfibre.}m^{-2})$
$b_{w.B}$	=	total basis weight of corrugated fibreboard (g.m <sup>-2</sup> )
$b_{w.L}$	=	total basis weight of linerboards (g.m <sup>-2</sup> )
$b_{w.M}$	=	basis weight of fluting medium (dimensions not stated)
С	=	corrugated fibreboard thickness (or calliper) (m)
<i>C</i> ′	=	fitted constant to express temperature dependence of $C$
		(dimensionless)
Ca	=	air specific heat (1005 J.kg <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
$C_B$	=	board thickness (dimensions not stated)
CC	=	average corrugation count (dimensions not stated)
<b>C</b> <sub>com</sub>	=	combined (fibre, liquid water and water vapour) specific heat
		capacity (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
Cf	=	specific heat capacity of paper fibre (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
CFB	=	corrugated fibreboard (subscript)
$C_G$	=	Guggenheim constant (dimensionless)
C <sub>HS</sub>	=	thickness of homogeneous strip (m)
$C_{\kappa}$	=	corrugated fibreboard thickness (mm)
$C_L$	=	linerboard thickness (dimensions not stated)
$CS_{CD-DBL}$	=	compression strength of the double-backer linerboard in the
		cross-machine direction (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )

CS <sub>CD-M</sub>	=	compression strength of the fluting medium in the cross-
		machine direction (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )
CS <sub>CD-SFL</sub>	=	compression strength of the single-facer linerboard in the
		cross-machine direction (N.m <sup>-</sup> )
$C_V$	=	specific heat capacity of water vapour (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
C <sub>W</sub>	=	specific heat capacity of liquid water (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
D <sub>f</sub>	=	diffusion coefficient of water vapour in the fluting medium $(m^2.s^{-1})$
D <sub>water-air</sub>	=	diffusivity of water in air $(m^2.s^{-1})$
D1	=	roll-stand to preconditioner distance (m)
D2	=	over first preconditioner roll distance (m)
D3	_	between preconditioner rolls distance (m)
D0 D4	_	over second preconditioner roll distance (m)
D5	_	between preconditioner and Steam shower distance (m)
DG	_	steem shower distance (m)
	_	hetween steem shower and single focur distance (m)
	=	between steam-shower and single-facer distance (iii)
E	=	sneet porosity (dimensionless)
ECD	=	fluting medium Young's modulus in the cross machine
FOT		diffection (dimensions not stated)
ECT	=	corrugated fibreboard edgewise compression test strength $(N m^{-1})$
FCT.	_	edgewise compression test value of A and AB flute corrugated
	_	fibrehoard (kgf cm <sup>-1</sup> )
FCT <sub>2</sub>	=	edgewise compression test value of B flute corrugated
2012		fibreboard (kgf.cm <sup>-1</sup> )
$ECT_A$	=	edgewise compression strength of A-flute corrugated
		fibreboard (kgf.cm <sup>-1</sup> )
$ECT_{AB}$	=	edgewise compression strength of AB-flute corrugated
		fibreboard (kgf.cm <sup>-1</sup> )
ECT <sub>est1</sub>	=	estimated edgewise compression test strength based on
		linerboard and fluting medium properties and equation 2.7 (N)
ECT <sub>est2</sub>	=	estimated edgewise compression test strength based on
		linerboard and fluting medium properties and equation 2.9 (N)
E <sub>HS</sub>	=	elastic modulus of homogeneous strip (N.m <sup>-2</sup> )
El	=	geometric mean bending stiffness (N.m)
$E_L$	=	elastic modulus of linerboards (dimensions not stated)
E <sub>MD</sub>	=	fluting medium Young's modulus in the machine direction
		(dimensions not stated)
ERH	=	sample equilibrium relative humidity
fc	=	skin friction coefficient (dimensionless)
FC <sub>1</sub>	=	fitted constants (dimensions not stated)
FC <sub>2</sub>	=	fitted constants (dimensions not stated)
$FC_2$	=	fitted constants (dimensions not stated)
FC4	_	fitted constants, value not stated (dimensions not stated)
FC-	_	fitted constants, value not stated (dimensions not stated)
	_	fitted constants, value not stated (dimensions not stated)
	_	fitted constants, value not stated (dimensions not stated)
FC.	_	fitted constant (dimensions not stated)
	_	fitted constant (dimensions not stated)
<b>FU</b> 9	=	inted constant (dimensions not stated)

$FC_{10}$	=	fitted constant (dimensions not stated)
$FC_{11}$	=	fitted constant (dimensions not stated)
<i>FC</i> <sub>12</sub>	=	fitted constants (dimensions not stated)
<i>FC</i> <sub>13</sub>	=	fitted constant (dimensions not stated)
$FC_{14}$	=	fitted constant (dimensionless)
<i>FC</i> <sub>15</sub>	=	fitted constant – value unknown (dimensions not stated)
$FC_{16}$	=	fitted constant – value unknown (dimensions not stated)
$FC_{17}$	=	fitted constant (dimensionless)
$FC_{18}$	=	fitted constant (dimensionless)
<i>FC</i> <sub>19</sub>	=	fitted constant (dimensionless)
F <sub>CF</sub>	=	contact force between fluting medium and preconditioner roll
		(N)
FCT	=	corrugated fibreboard flat crush (kPa)
FM	=	fluting medium (subscript)
Н	=	corrugated fibreboard hardness (N)
h <sub>c</sub>	=	convection heat transfer coefficient $(W.m^{-2}K^{-1})$
h <sub>cB</sub>	=	bottom boundary heat transfer coefficient (J.K <sup>-1</sup> m <sup>-2</sup> )
h <sub>contact</sub>	=	surface contact heat transfer coefficient $(W.m^{-2}K^{-1})$
h <sub>cs</sub>	=	convection coefficient for curved surfaces (W.m <sup>-2</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
h <sub>cT</sub>	=	top boundary heat transfer coefficient $(J.K^{-1}m^{-2})$
h <sub>m</sub>	=	surface mass transfer coefficient (m.s <sup>-1</sup> )
h <sub>mB</sub>	=	bottom boundary mass transfer coefficient (kg.m <sup>-2</sup> )
h <sub>mT</sub>	=	top boundary mass transfer coefficient (kg.m <sup>-2</sup> )
h <sub>oc</sub>	=	over all heat transfer coefficient $(W.m^{-2}K^{-1})$
h <sub>ps</sub>	=	convection coefficient for planar surfaces (W.m <sup>-2</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
h <sub>R</sub>	=	surface heat transfer coefficient to air $(W.m^{-2}K^{-1})$
$H_{v}$	=	water vapour enthalpy (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> )
i	=	i <sup>th</sup> measurement
<i>K</i> '	=	fitted constant to express temperature dependence of $K$
		(dimensionless)
Κ	=	linerboard factor (dimensions not stated)
k	=	test method coefficient (dimensions not stated)
K <sub>G</sub>	=	factor correcting properties of the multi-layer molecules with
		respect to the bulk liquid (dimensionless)
LA	=	corrugated fibreboard liner adhesion (N)
LB1	=	single-facer linerboard (subscript)
LB2	=	double-backer linerboard (subscript)
Μ	=	moisture content ratio of fluting medium (kg <sub>water</sub> .kg <sub>fibre</sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
$M_1$	=	reference moisture content ratio (kg <sub>water</sub> .kg <sub>solids</sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
M <sub>2</sub>	=	new moisture content ratio (kg <sub>water</sub> .kg <sub>solids</sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
MC	=	moisture content (% db)
MC <sub>SW</sub>	=	sidewall moisture content (%, basis not given)
MC <sub>UKB</sub>	=	moisture content (%, basis unknown)
Mi	=	initial moisture content ratio of the fluting medium i.e.
		moisture content of the fluting medium on the roll-stand
		(kg <sub>water</sub> .kg <sub>fibre</sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
M <sub>o</sub> '	=	fitted constant to express temperature dependence of $M_o$
		(kg <sub>water</sub> kg <sub>dry fibre</sub> <sup>-1</sup> )
Mo	=	mono-layer moisture content ratio $(kg_{water} kg_{dry fibre}^{-1})$

$M_w$	=	molar mass of water (kg.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
n	=	number of measurements (count)
<i>n</i> 1	=	sample size for sample 1 (count)
<i>n</i> <sub>2</sub>	=	sample size for sample 2 (count)
$P_c$	=	contact pressure (kPa)
P <sub>FM/P</sub>	=	contact pressure between the fluting medium and the
		preconditioner roll (Pa)
$P_{ice,\theta}$	=	vapour pressure of pure ice at $\theta^{\circ}C$ (Pa)
PiceT	=	vapour pressure of pure ice at <i>T</i> Kelvin (mbar)
$P_{ice, \text{ sample db } \theta}$	=	vapour pressure of pure ice at the sample dry bulb temperature
		(Pa)
$P_{ice, \text{ sample dp } \theta}$	=	vapour pressure of pure ice at the hygrometer dew point
		temperature output (Pa)
Pr	=	Prandtl's number (dimensionless)
PR	=	printed ratio (dimensionless)
$P_{sample, \theta}$	=	partial water vapour pressure exerted by the sample at $\theta^{\circ}C$ (Pa)
$P_{sat,\theta}$	=	saturated water vapour pressure at $\theta^{\circ}C$ (Pa)
$P_{sat, sample db \theta}$	=	saturated water vapour pressure at the sample dry bulb
<i>i</i> 1		temperature (Pa)
$P_{sat, sample dp \theta}$	=	saturated water vapour pressure at the hygrometer dew point
		temperature output (Pa)
<b>P</b> <sub>satT</sub>	=	saturated water vapour pressure <i>T</i> Kelvin (mbar)
$P_{v}$	=	water vapour partial pressure (Pa)
Q	=	differential heat of water vapour sorption (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> )
$Q_R$	=	differential heat of sorption as calculated by Reardon (J.kg <sup>-1</sup> )
Qs	=	heat of sorption (J.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
R	=	gas constant (8.314 $J.K^{-1}mol^{-1}$ )
r	=	radius of curvature of the fluting rolls (dimensions not stated)
$R^2$	=	correlation coefficient (%)
$RCT_{L}$	=	overall ring crush test strength of the linerboards (dimensions
		not stated)
R <sub>DB</sub>	=	gas constant (cal.R <sup>-1</sup> .mol <sup>-1</sup> )
RH	=	air relative humidity (%)
R <sub>max</sub>	=	maximum pore radius (m)
Ro	=	gas constant (82.05 cm <sup>3</sup> .atm.gmol <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
RR	=	retention ratio - ratio of compressive strengths of fluted to
		non-fluted medium (dimensionless)
S	=	degree of fractional saturation (dimensionless)
$S_1^2$	=	variance for sample 1 (dimensions vary)
<b>s</b> <sup>2</sup> <sub>2</sub>	=	variance for sample 2 (dimensions vary)
SC	=	fluting medium sheet thickness (m)
SCR	=	secondary region compression rate (in.in <sup>-1</sup> hr <sup>-1</sup> )
SSCS	=	short span compression strength (kN.m <sup>-1</sup> )
SSCS <sub>CD-DBL</sub>	=	short span compression strength of the double-backer
		linerboard in the cross-machine direction (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )
SSCS <sub>CD-M</sub>	=	short span compression strength of the fluting medium in the
		cross-machine direction (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )
SSCS <sub>CD-SFL</sub>	=	short span compression strength of the single-facer linerboard
		in the cross-machine direction (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )

SSE	=	error sum of squares (dimensions vary)
Т	=	temperature (K)
$T_1$	=	temperature of sample 1 (K)
$T_2$	=	temperature of sample 1 (K)
t	=	time (s)
TF	=	take-up factor $(m_{\text{fluting medium}} m_{\text{board}}^{-1})$
$T_i$	=	initial temperature of the fluting medium i.e. temperature of
		the fluting medium on the roll-stand (°C)
$TP_1$	=	total pressure of condition 1 (atm)
$TP_2$	=	total pressure of condition 2 (atm)
$TS_L$	=	tensile stiffness of the liner (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )
TS <sub>gth</sub>	=	tensile strength (kN.m-1)
<b>t</b> <sub>stat</sub>	=	t statistic for two-sample t test (dimensionless)
TtF	=	time to failure (hours)
$V_1$	=	tensile force vector (N.m <sup>-1</sup> )
Va	=	air velocity (m.s <sup>-1</sup> )
Ve	=	air velocity at boundary layer edge (m.s <sup>-1</sup> )
$V_L$	=	molar volume of water (18 m <sup>3</sup> .gmol <sup>-1</sup> )
VP <sub>airθ</sub>	=	water vapour pressure of the air at temperature $\theta$ (Pa)
$VP_R$	=	vapour pressure ratio (Pa Pa <sup>-1</sup> )
VP <sub>satθ</sub>	=	saturated vapour pressure at temperature $\theta$ (Pa)
$W_{FM}$	=	width of fluting medium – cross-machine direction (m)
X	=	proportion of conduction heat transfer via parallel analogy
<i>x</i> bar <sub>1</sub>	=	average of sample 1 (dimensions vary)
<i>x</i> bar <sub>2</sub>	=	average of sample 2 (dimensions vary)
Ŷ	=	estimated dependent variable value (dimensions vary)
У	=	measured dependent variable value (dimensions vary)
Ζ	=	dimension in the fluting medium thickness direction (m)
$\varDelta H_{adsorp}$	=	heat of adsorption of water vapour onto adsorbent (cal.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
∆H <sub>C</sub>	=	difference in enthalpy between bulk liquid and multilayer, fitted variable (J.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
$\Delta H_{cond}$	=	heat of condensation of water (cal.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
$\Delta H_{K}$	=	difference in enthalpy between monolayer and multilayer, fitted (J.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
$\Delta H_M$	=	fitted constant to express temperature dependence of $M_o$ (J.mol <sup>-1</sup> )
δ	=	0.0 for difference between two means (dimensions vary)
$\delta$	=	diffusibility factor (dimensions not stated)
θ	=	fluting medium temperature (°C)
$ heta_{AB}$	=	temperature of ambient air or preconditioner in contact with bottom surface ( $^{\circ}C$ )
$\theta_{AT}$	=	temperature of ambient air or preconditioner in contact with top surface (°C)
$\theta_{CA}$	=	contact angle between fluting medium and preconditioner roll (°)
КАВ	=	permeability of ambient air at bottom surface (m <sup>2</sup> )
KAT	=	permeability of ambient air at top surface $(m^2)$
Kr	=	relative permeability (m <sup>2</sup> )

Ks	=	saturated intrinsic permeability (m <sup>2</sup> )
$K_V$	=	fluting medium water vapour permeability (m <sup>2</sup> )
$\lambda_1$	=	thermal conductivity for components in series $(W.m^{-1}K^{-1})$
$\lambda_2$	=	thermal conductivity for components in parallel $(W.m^{-1}K^{-1})$
$\lambda_{com}$	=	combined thermal conductivity of fibre, liquid water and water $(W_{1} - \frac{1}{2}W_{1})$
		vapour (W.m K)
leff	=	effective conduction coefficient (W.m <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
$\lambda_f$	=	paper fibre thermal conductivity $(W.m^{-1}K^{-1})$
$\lambda_{V}$	=	water vapour thermal conductivity (W.m <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
$\lambda_{W}$	=	liquid water thermal conductivity (W.m <sup>-1</sup> K <sup>-1</sup> )
$\mu_{v}$	=	water vapour viscosity (kg.m <sup>-1</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> )
π	=	pi (dimensionless)
$ ho_{a}$	=	air density $(kg.m^{-3})$
$ ho_{ m f}$	=	density of paper fibre (kg.m <sup>-3</sup> )
$ ho_M$	=	density of fluting medium (dimensions not stated)
$ ho_{ m v}$	=	density of water vapour (kg.m <sup>-3</sup> )
$ ho_{w}$	=	density of liquid water (kg.m <sup>-3</sup> )
$\phi_P$	=	diameter of pressure roll (m)
$ ho_v$	=	water vapour density $(kg_{watervapour}.m^{-3})$
$ ho_{\scriptscriptstyle V\!A}$	=	water vapour density of ambient air (kg <sub>water</sub> .m <sup>-3</sup> )
$ ho_{\scriptscriptstyle VAB}$	=	water vapour density of ambient air in contact with bottom
		surface $(kg_{water}.m^{-3})$
τ	=	tortuosity factor (dimensions not stated)
<i>φ(MC)</i>	=	water content dependent function (dimensions not stated)