

Sustainability a worthwhile challenge for us all

As we look ahead to 2008 and the innovations, issues and changes we may face as a company, as growers and as an industry, one thing stands out as having an increasing effect on the way we all run our businesses, and that's sustainability.

If you think back even five years, consider how much wider public awareness of sustainability is now compared to then, both as a concept and as a way to determine how and where the public spend its money.

Whether through conscious choice or in order to meet market requirements, in these five years, most New Zealand growers have made changes to their horticultural practices that meet some kind of 'sustainable' objective.

When world-class awards like the Air New Zealand Wine Awards introduce a sustainable wine category, you know that the concept has real traction – and rightly so.

Some who favour a wholly organic approach to horticulture may feel the sustainable wine growing standard doesn't go far enough. However I think most of us acknowledge that all steps taken to implement sustainable practices, like reducing blanket applications of crop protection products, reducing water and fuel usage and utilising beneficial insects, are critical for the long-term future of New Zealand's horticultural sector.

In our own business at Fruitfed Supplies, we are constantly working with new suppliers and products and providing our staff with advanced knowledge that enable growers to take fresh and innovative steps towards ever-more sustainable growing protocols.

Through our specialised Crop Monitoring Services and Technical teams, we work with a number of industry groups to ensure that our advice to growers meets the targets established in various sectors for sustainable growing practices. This knowledge is then shared with our customer service and field representatives.

The increase in growers seeking organic certification has also drawn the attention of Fruitfed Supplies' personnel. Last year alone, three pipfruit orchards in Hawke's Bay commenced the changeover to fully organic production systems.

Organic Braeburn apples were realising a 50% premium in market pricing last year, although we understand this dropped significantly this season to 10-20%. If customers are prepared to pay more for organically-grown produce, then it makes sense to consider whether going organic is a commercially-viable option for your property. As we see in the kiwifruit sector, organic kiwifruit orchards now make up an increasing percentage of the tray production with more blocks considering conversion.

This year our Hastings branch successfully retained its Bio-Gro certification as reseller of registered organic crop protection products and more of our staff are gaining significant levels of knowledge in this growing sector.

Of course, sustainable growing practices involve more than just organics or what crop protection products are applied and how often. There is a strong focus on minimising consumption of natural resources, such as water and fuel, in the production cycle and the issue of carbon credits is highly topical.

What does all this mean? Well, we expect there will continue to be plenty of challenges and opportunities for our industry. An ability to adapt on a consistent basis is a necessity, change and challenges are intrinsically linked, as you know – and that's one of the reasons we all enjoy being part of the horticultural sector.

May 2008 bring you interesting challenges and positive opportunities! ➡

Stephen Guerin
General Manager
Fruitfed Supplies



Stephen Guerin



The new sustainable wine category at this year's Air New Zealand Wine Awards was won by the 2006 Cottage Block Hawke's Bay Chardonnay, earning it the accolade 'pure gold'

Yealands' ongoing Awatere developments

With 680ha of vines already planted at their Seaview vineyard, Yealands Estate already has the largest privately-owned planting in New Zealand.

And with 230ha being planted next season, and perhaps more planting in 2009, the vineyard is going to be the single largest vineyard – privately-owned or otherwise – in the country.

The sheer scale of the enterprise doesn't faze Gareth Goodsir, the vineyard manager employed three years ago by Yealands Estate's founder, and well-known Marlborough entrepreneur, Peter Yealands.

"It's not the size of the vineyard that's the challenge; it's more the situation," says Gareth, who has more than a decade of experience in

Marlborough vineyards and also won the national Silver Secateurs grapevine pruning competition in 2002. The Yealands' Estate vineyard sits up above the Awatere River at the end of Seaview Road, east of Seddon.

"The biggest challenges are the weather extremes with wind playing a big role in our management strategies," says Gareth. "In spring, for example, we barely get one night a month suitable for weed spraying – certainly we can't spray during the day – and throughout the season, 70-80% of our canopy spraying is done at night."

A good breeze among vigorous Sauvignon Blanc vines helps reduce *Botrytis* risk, but, as Fruitfed Supplies field representative Blair McLean points out, the vines also need a good nutrition programme to help stop them getting damaged.

YaraLiva Calcinit: key to high value, marketable crops

Formulated to the highest quality standards, YaraLiva Calcinit is fully soluble calcium nitrate (19% Ca, 15.5% N) providing strength-building calcium and fast-acting nitrate nitrogen.

Improved crop quality

Crops store for longer with less rot when calcium levels are high in fruit, bulbs and leaves. Calcium strengthens cell walls and disease impact is often reduced with higher calcium levels, which also helps reduce plant stress during heat, cold or windy conditions.

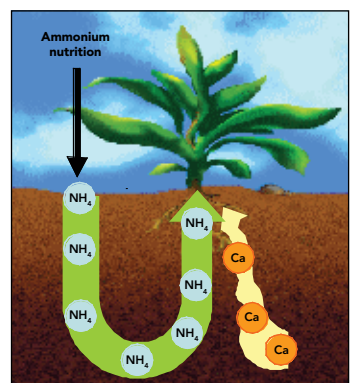
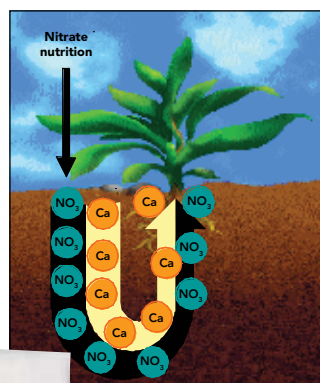
Environmentally friendly fertiliser

Nitrate nitrogen increases the uptake of nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, potassium and trace elements, but ammonium



Apply nitrate for enhanced uptake of calcium

- Nitrate carries calcium with it
- Ammonium uptake hampers calcium uptake



nitrogen depresses their uptake. Calcinit is non-acidifying in the soil which is particularly important when applying nitrogen fertilisers through drip systems. In comparison, urea and ammonium nitrate will contribute to sub soil acidity.

Formulated primarily for fertigation and hydroponics, Calcinit will not clog lines and provides an immediate and prolonged supply of nitrogen and calcium. Quick to dissolve in water without residue, it can be used in drip, sprinkler and centre pivot irrigators. Calcinit can be mixed with other water soluble fertilisers, except concentrated stock solutions containing phosphate or sulphate. For further information, talk to your Fruitfed Supplies representative. ➡



Covering virtually all the land visible in these images, the Yealands Estate vineyard is already the largest privately-owned vineyard in New Zealand.

"There are four different age groups of vines, so they're all treated a bit differently. Calcinit and the Kristalon range are all useful via the fertigation system," says Blair who has assisted Peter with horticultural supplies for a number of his vineyard developments over the past ten years.



Vineyard manager Gareth Goodsir and Fruitfed Supplies representative Blair McLean check the growth of vines planted a year ago.

Another facet of the Yealands' Estate enterprise is their decision to utilise Pellenc multi-function over-row tractors for a variety of tasks. "Their primary job is harvesting, but they also trim, leaf pluck and spray – covering about 30% more than a regular tractor and sprayer set-up in a day. We need fast, efficient machinery, so they're worth the investment," says Gareth who manages twelve full-time vineyard staff, and 40-150 seasonal workers contracted to plant, prune and vine train.

The 2008 harvest will be only the third from Yealands Estate, but, for the first time, most of the grapes will be heading into their own winery, which is currently being built. Like the vineyard's staged development, the winery's capacity will grow to accommodate the increased production from the predominately Sauvignon Blanc vines. Gareth says there are also significant areas of Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and Riesling established and being planted.

Yealands Estate has sustainable winegrowing accreditation and future plans include ensuring the winery also meets the greenest possible standards.

There will always be something new going on at Yealands Estate, says Gareth, who wouldn't be surprised to learn there will be many more hectares of grapes being planted in future years. ⇨

Pyganic only Bio-Gro certified pyrethrum insecticide



Suitable for use in both organic and conventional crop production systems, the broad spectrum pyrethrum insecticide Pyganic® offers fast-acting contact control of a range of insect pests.

With label claims for use in citrus, kiwifruit, avocado and ornamental crops, Pyganic contains 13g/l pyrethrins in the form of an emulsifiable concentrate. Manufactured in the USA using a unique process to produce organically compliant pyrethrum, Pyganic provides rapid knockdown and kill of insect pests within minutes, says Frank Visser from Key Industries Ltd, the distributors of Pyganic.

"While able to be used at any stage during the growing season, the fact that Pyganic has no withholding period means that it provides a

valuable tool to growers requiring insect control in the critical pre-harvest window without having to worry about chemical residues," says Frank.

Talk to your Fruitfed Supplies representative about Pyganic or visit www.pyganic.com. ⇨



Control powdery mildew in squash with Quintec + Systhane 200EW

Dow AgroSciences and Fruitfed Supplies announce a new tool for robust control of powdery mildew in squash.

"Two years of collaborative field trials showed tank mixes of Quintec® and Systhane® 200EW provided outstanding control of powdery mildew in squash," says Bernard Harris, technical specialist for Dow AgroSciences.

Quintec protects against powdery mildew with its extended vapour action which aids canopy coverage. Its new mode of action means there is low potential for resistance. Systhane 200EW provides both protectant and curative activity against powdery mildew with excellent systemic activity.

Two species of powdery mildew damage squash. *Erysiphe cichoracearum* is more common early in the season while *Sphaerotheca fuliginea*, predominant later in the season, is regarded as the most damaging.



An early season protectant programme (sulphur) followed by Quintec plus Systhane 200EW during the six weeks from early flowering to harvest will control both species of powdery mildew.

Trials with Quintec plus Systhane 200EW

In field trials, three consecutive applications, at 14 day intervals, were made between early flowering and harvest when squash is most susceptible to powdery mildew.

Results showed:

- Tank mixes of Quintec plus Systhane 200EW gave outstanding control of both powdery mildew species (see table).
- Early application of Quintec plus Systhane 200EW at the start of flowering provided the greatest level of powdery mildew control during the critical fruit sizing period. ⇨

Mean leaf area infected by powdery mildew approx 14 days after three applications to squash between early flower and harvest

	<i>Erysiphe cichoracearum</i> (3 trials)	<i>Sphaerotheca fuliginea</i> (5 trials)
Quintec + Systhane 200EW	2.8	1.4
Flint®	62.5	not evaluated
Sulphur (5kg/ha)	25.0	18.4
Neptune™/Nimrod®	64.7	14.2
Untreated	86.1	48.5

®Quintec (ACVM No. P7296) and Systhane (ACVM No. P3459) are registered trademarks of Dow AgroSciences.

®Flint is a registered trademark of Bayer CropSciences.

™Neptune is a trademark of Tapuae Partnership, New Zealand.

®Nimrod is a registered trademark of a Makhteshim-Agan Company.

KEY FACTS OF QUINTEC + SYSTHANE 200EW

- Crop safety: No injury to squash from Quintec + Systhane 200EW was observed in any field trial.
- Resistance: Quintec has no cross resistance to fungicides currently registered for squash powdery mildew control. Systhane 200EW is a DMI fungicide to which fungal diseases can develop resistance if over-applied, or applied without appropriate mixes. Always apply Quintec + Systhane 200EW as a tank mix for squash.
- Both products have favourable environmental and toxicological profiles, which assists access to export markets.

BENEFITS FROM TANK MIXES OF QUINTEC + SYSTHANE 200EW IN SQUASH

1. Reliable control of both powdery mildew species.
2. Extended protection from Quintec. Powdery mildew does not 'explode' in favourable conditions.
3. Short term curative activity from Systhane 200EW. Low levels of powdery mildew, that are not visible at application, are controlled.
4. Quintec plus Systhane 200EW combines two different modes of action, maximising control and reducing potential for resistance.
5. Spray interval of 14 days, reducing application costs.

Breakthrough for pipfruit powdery mildew control

Mid-to-late season powdery mildew can be a scourge in apple crops, but Astral offers a new dimension for powdery mildew management.

Astral® has just been registered in New Zealand for powdery mildew control in apples. It has a 7-day WHP which allows its use through the later part of the season.

Astral prevents and cures powdery mildew with fast activity, quickly preventing mildew from spreading. It works on the disease with three modes of action, i.e. multi-site activity (see diagrams).

The formulation has built-in surfactant technology that gives superior foliage cover of the fungicide. It has very low toxicity to the user and the environment and will have a good place in the apple futures programme.

For powdery mildew control, apply 250-500g Astral per 100l water (minimum 2.5-5.0kg/ha). Apply on a 7-14 day schedule, from fifth cover to pre-harvest. Where conditions are conducive to sustained high disease pressure, use the higher rate of application and the shorter spray interval. ➡

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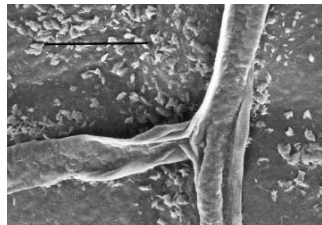
ASTRAL'S MULTI-SITE ACTIVITY

1. Buffers pH on leaf surfaces to the detriment of fungal spores
2. Dries out fungal spores by increasing osmotic levels
3. Inhibits germ tube growth by destroying cell membranes



Electron micrograph image shows the contact effect of Astral on powdery mildew spores within minutes of application. The mildew spore on the left was not treated with Astral; it is healthy and sending out an infectious tube. The two mildew spores below were treated with Astral causing rapid water loss.

Powdery mildew mycelium before Astral application



Powdery mildew mycelium after Astral application

TECH-KNOW TIPS

ASPARAGUS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ **Weed control** issues should be addressed before the ferns close up. The choice of herbicide depends on factors such as age of the crop, soil type and weed spectrum present.
- ✓ In warm humid weather *Stemphylium* **leaf spot** can defoliate the fern and cause dieback of above ground plant parts. Strategic applications of Score 250EC should be made if *Stemphylium* is seen in the crop and/or before favourable weather conditions. No more than 3 applications of Score should be made to active fern growth each season.

AVOCADOS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ Six spotted mite populations continue to remain at high levels, both in Bay of Plenty and Northern orchards. Although **six-spotted mite** pressure normally eases during January, be sure to monitor and control with Mit é mec + DC Tron Plus if necessary. Mit é mec gives particularly good control on new young flush at this time of year, including ovicidal control of mite eggs.

- ✓ Seaweed fertilisers such as **Calibra** may also be useful, to assist early fruitlet growth and encourage general tree health.
- ✓ Fruit-set is looking good at this stage – ensure adequate **nutrients** are available to promote summer flush and fruit growth. Your Fruitfed Supplies representative is fully trained in avocado nutrition – please contact them to discuss your situation.
- ✓ Maintain a fungicide cover with copper products such as **Kocide 2000LF** as avocado fruit rot pathogens can infect developing fruitlets at any stage.
- ✓ **Irrigation** requirements should also be closely monitored. Dry periods may place undue stress on the tree, limiting fruit-set, fruit growth or causing premature fruit drop. The irrigation specialists at Fruitfed Supplies can help both with assessing the need for irrigation on your property, as well as system design and installation.

Leaf roller control is a priority to protect avocado fruitlets as pressure is usually high over the spring period. This pest will move between fruit as they start to size and form bunches, causing significant damage (see photo). Control should preferably be carried out with soft compounds such as Mimic 70W to preserve beneficial insect populations.



Leaf roller larvae and damage

TECH-KNOW TIPS

BRASSICAS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ At the end of January there is a change in the **diamond-back moth** resistance management strategy to the second window. For the rest of this month growers should continue to use Success Naturalyte or Bt products based on the kurstaki strain, e.g. Delfin. Registered organophosphates, carbamates or endosulfan can also be used (in either window). Insecticides should only be applied if pest numbers exceed thresholds.
- ✓ Apply Chess or Pirimor if the **aphid threshold is exceeded**.

CARROTS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ **Leaf spot** diseases are more common in warm, wet, humid weather. Monitor crops for the dark brown to black irregular shaped lesions of Alternaria leaf spot on older leaves and the tan, brown or gray small circular spots of Cercospora leaf spot on younger leaves. Apply captan or mancozeb to protect foliage against Cercospora or Score 250EC for control of both Alternaria and Cercospora. No more than 3 Score applications should be made to a crop.

CITRUS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ Monitor for **citrus red mite**, which often appear mid-summer, particularly where hard compounds are used to control KCT. Mit é mec is now registered for citrus red mite control, offering ovicidal activity.
- ✓ Monitor fruitlets for **Kelly's citrus thrips** right through January, controlling if necessary. Use a hand lens to find KCT larvae beneath the calyx.
- ✓ Monitor for **scale** crawler release. The young stages are most easily controlled; discuss control options with your Fruitfed Supplies representative.

Maintain the fungicide programme post-flowering to protect against **scab** and **melanose** infection of young shoots and fruitlets. NZCGI-funded research indicates that to assist prevention of **Glomerella** in Satsuma mandarins (see photo), Dithane DF Rainshield should be applied as soon as possible after hand-thinning, which will generally be necessary on blocks with heavy fruit-set to ensure optimum fruit size at harvest.



*Glomerella on mandarin
(Photo courtesy: Keith Pyle)*

GRAPES



Reminders for January:

- ✓ Pre-bunch closure is one of the critical spray windows for **Botrytis** control. Apply a suitable fungicide like Switch before bunches close up.
- ✓ Monitor for **leaf roller** and, if thresholds are breached, apply a suitable insecticide.
- ✓ January is a high risk period for **powdery mildew**. Maintain a tight fungicide cover with products like Quintec through till veraison. NB. Quintec 35 day PHI.

- ✓ Monitor for **downy mildew**. Apply an appropriate fungicide in anticipation of conditions conducive for infection.
- ✓ **Canopy management** practices that increase air movement through the canopy improve foliage drying time and reduce humidity around bunches, reducing disease pressure.

At pre-bunch closure (PBC) berries are relatively immune to *Botrytis* infection but it is nevertheless an important spray window for *Botrytis* management, representing the last opportunity before harvest to achieve complete fungicide coverage of berries.

Berries are expanding rapidly in January, so to ensure the interior architecture of the bunch receives adequate coverage, it's better to be conservative and spray early than wait too long and find bunches have partially closed.

If **leaf roller monitoring** results indicate that SWNZ thresholds have been breached, there are a number of environmentally-benign insecticides that can be applied at PBC which will effectively control the pest without leaving a problematic residue on bunches at harvest. Call your local Fruitfed Supplies field representative to discuss the options.

KIWIFRUIT



Reminders for January:

- ✓ **Leaf roller control** is critical immediately following fruit-set through to January. Apply two sprays for optimal control; one at flowering and another 4-5 weeks later. Proclaim offers best efficacy in this period with a short (42 day) PHI ensuring blocks meet early start crop requirements. Leaf roller sprays applied more than 5 weeks (Hayward) or 7 weeks (Gold) after fruit-set must be in response to monitoring.
- ✓ After fruit-set, **foliar fertilisers**, such as Kiwi K and Pentaflor, may assist leaf condition and fruit quality. Magnesium and zinc have been low in many spring leaf samples. Pentaflor offers the best remedy, also providing calcium to fruitlets which aids post-harvest quality.
- ✓ Seaweed fertilisers like **SM6 Plus** or **Calibra** can assist fruitlet growth, and fruitlet and leaf quality. Apply from fruit-set onward.

When considering **post-flower control of scale**, remember the application of mineral oil from 14 to 35 days after fruit-set is risky. There is also a lull in scale activity between the first and second generation crawler release during December and early January. Scale sprays applied more than 9 weeks after fruit set (Gold) or more than 7 weeks after fruit-set (Hayward) must be in response to monitoring. Contact your Fruitfed Supplies branch for scale control options in summer.



*Scale on fruit
prior to harvest*

ONIONS



Reminders for January:

- ✓ Proteus is a new **onion thrips** insecticide from Bayer CropScience. It is a mixture of thiacloprid (Calypto) and deltamethrin (Decis Forte) in an oil dispersion formulation. Two applications can be made per crop. With a 42 day with-holding period, Proteus is best used earlier in a crops growth.
- ✓ Synthetic pyrethroid resistance is stable in the onion thrips populations, that is, although even though SPs were not used against a population, the SP resistance remains in the population and SPs will not maintain effective control of populations.

PIPFRUIT



Reminders for January:

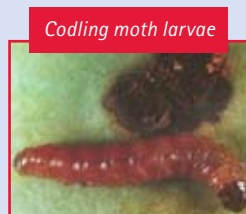
- ✓ Fruitlets susceptible to **summer rots** need fungicide protection if rain and warmth are anticipated
- ✓ Maintain fungicide protection of blocks at risk of **powdery mildew**, e.g. Euparen Multi (45 day PHI, not for Apple Futures Programme (AFP)).
- ✓ Monitor **codling moth** traps and record for audit purposes. Apply Delegate (14 day PHI) if thresholds are exceeded.
- ✓ Monitor traps for first summer generation of **leaf roller** larvae. If thresholds exceeded, apply Delegate.
- ✓ Early January, monitor for **European red mite**. If thresholds exceeded, apply Mit é Mec, as mites are still juveniles. NB. Not for AFP.
- ✓ In known areas of high **scale** risk in mid-late season varieties, apply Calypso (42-day PHI, not for AFP) as crawlers released.
- ✓ Monitor for **woolly apple aphids**. Discuss insecticide choice and PHI with your exporter.
- ✓ Continue **regular calcium chloride applications**. Avoid spraying when hot/dry or slow drying as injury can occur. Add a wetting agent if applied alone.

December's monitoring and weather predictions help determine choice and frequency of subsequent protective fungicide covers for effective **black spot** control. For curative affect, apply Systhane plus a protectant. When applied 72-96 hours before an infection period, Systhane will provide curative control before disease symptoms are visible. Maintain a regular protective fungicide cover, such as Euparen Multi (45 day PHI) which also provides **powdery mildew and summer rot control**, or Orthocide (14 day PHI with only one application in last 28 days). Reapply after rain. For Apple Futures Programme (AFP) where residues preclude the use of the above conventional fungicides, maintain protective cover with a compliant fungicide, e.g. Kumulus. Repeat applications after rain. Do not apply Kumulus if temperatures exceed 25°C.



Black spot, *Venturia inaequalis*

Recently registered in New Zealand (a world first), Delegate is a new member of the spinosyn class of insecticides developed by Dow AgroSciences. Spinosyns, produced by the fermentation of the bacteria *S. spinosa*, are synthetically modified to produce the active ingredient spinetoram, which has high levels of activity on both **codling moth and leaf roller**.



Codling moth larvae

Independent trials by Fruitfed Supplies Technical team on our North and South Island research sites confirm Delegate offers excellent leaf roller and codling moth control. Fruit finish was also excellent. It offers an alternative IPM tool for mid-to-late season, has a low use rate and low residue profile. Its 14 day PHI means nil detectable residues at harvest; ideal for AFP. Delegate was registered in the USA under the EPA reduced risk pesticide registration scheme.

Talk to your Fruitfed Supplies representative re rates and timing.

POTATOES



Reminders for January:

- ✓ **Potato tuber moth** catches in pheromone traps fluctuate from week to week, but as the number of weekly records increases trends in

catches should become apparent. Peaks of catches at approximately six week intervals may indicate potato tuber moth generations, with numbers of larval mines in potato foliage peaking up to 2 weeks following moth catch peaks. Use this information to time insecticide applications if the tubers are at risk of being infested.

- ✓ **Sclerotinia** can start appearing in crops from row closure on as Sclerotinia spores germinate and infect dead or dying plant tissue. Infected stems eventually die and dry out, turning a bleached tan colour. White fungal growth and hard black Sclerotia may be found inside the dead stems. Management of this disease centres on crop rotation to minimise numbers of Sclerotia in the soil. Irrigation management to avoid long periods of leaf wetness or high relative humidity within the crop canopy will help reduce disease pressure. Applications of Shirlan® around row closure may help prevent infection.

SQUASH



Reminders for January:

- ✓ The aggressive **powdery mildew** pathogen, *Sphaerotheca fuliginea*, becomes dominant in the warmth of summer. This pathogen can rapidly develop to epidemic levels severely affecting the crop canopy. A tight fungicide programme is critical for the production of high quality squash for export.
- ✓ The registration of **Quintec and Systhane** as a tank mix, gives growers a very effective fungicide combination for control of powdery mildew. Three applications should be made per crop, from the start of flowering at 14 day intervals. Quintec plus Systhane has a 14 day with-holding period.

SUMMERFRUIT



Reminders for January:

- ✓ The first summer generation of **leaf roller** larvae are active during January. Success Naturalyte application is recommended, as it has a 1 day PHI for New Zealand.
- ✓ Continue to monitor for **thrips**. If thresholds are exceeded, apply an insecticide like Success Naturalyte, but discuss product choice and PHI with your exporter before application of any insecticide.

Brown rot infections affect ripening fruit during wet weather 3-4 weeks prior to harvest. Under optimum conditions, infection may be visible within 48 hours. Brown rot may also occur during dry conditions, possibly from latent infections within the fruit. Such infections are most serious if control has not been maintained over the bloom period. Therefore, prior to an infection event, apply a pre-harvest protectant fungicide.

The registration of Folicur for late season pre-harvest use is valuable for growers with fruit destined for the USA. Summerfruit NZ has gained an extension for one more season with apricots. Folicur has systemic properties and is safe to beneficial insects (1 day PHI in NZ, Australia and USA; not registered for apricots in USA, shuckfall PHI). Always check PHI with your exporter.



Brown rot infection on peach

Trinity Hill wins Fruitfed-sponsored Syrah category

Trinity Hill's 2006 Homage Syrah was recently named the Fruitfed Supplies champion Syrah trophy winner as well as the Air New Zealand champion wine of the show.

An outstanding 2006 vintage played a big part in this award-winning wine says Trinity Hill's John Hancock.

"We were careful to keep crop levels low and fruit quality for the Homage was almost perfect, so we didn't want to interfere too much with any clever winemaking! We used 5% Viognier as a co-fermenter with the Syrah, which subtly changes its masculine characteristics by increasing the perfume aspects and softening the tannins to create something altogether more feminine," says John.

The grapes from which the Homage Syrah is made are grown in Trinity Hill's Gimblett Gravels vineyards. John says they make the Homage wines only when the fruit is up to their own strict quality parameters. To date, Homage wines have been made in '02, '04, '06 and '07.

Syrah has the potential to be to the Hawke's Bay what Sauvignon Blanc is to Marlborough, says John. "The international wine press are very taken with Hawke's Bay Syrah and, because it is so reflective of place, we believe it will be the wine that gives Hawke's Bay something unique."

As a grape, John describes Syrah as "...very transparent as a variety; it very much reflects where it is grown and how the wine is made. Therefore it will produce very different wines from each vineyard, giving a definite sense of place, of terroir.

"The more producers the better, provided the quality is there, since we need critical mass to be effective in the market. So far we have been able to sell successfully, even at the very top end, into some of the most prestigious outlets in the world."

John adds: "We were very pleased to receive the trophy from Fruitfed as we avail ourselves of their expertise and help regularly in our vineyards. We are very appreciative of what they do."

Stephen Guerin, Fruitfed Supplies' general manager, attended the awards' dinner in Christchurch and was delighted to present John with the champion Syrah trophy.

"We have sponsored a varietal category in the Air New Zealand Wine Awards for several years as a way of demonstrating our support for the ever-expanding wine sector," said Stephen. "This is the first time we have sponsored the champion Syrah so it's particularly exciting to see Trinity Hill then win the champion wine of the show with their 2006 Homage Syrah. This really is a significant achievement for which John and the Trinity Hill team can justifiably be proud. Our heartfelt congratulations to them all and our thanks to Air New Zealand and New Zealand Winegrowers for running a world-class wine competition." ♦♦



Fruitfed Supplies' general manager Stephen Guerin presents the champion Syrah trophy to John Hancock, CEO of Trinity Hills.

JUDGES' COMMENTS

Comments about the 2006 Trinity Hill Homage Syrah from the Air New Zealand Wine Awards judging panel, headed by Steve Smith, MW, included: "This Syrah shows what an opportunity we have with this variety. The nose is serious and complex with heady currant, black doris plum, liquorice, spice, flowers and pepper notes wrapped up in a sense of real restraint. The palate is rich and dense with beautiful fruit sweetness and concentration balanced by a superb savoury and sandalwood note that gives a strong feel of power and elegance. This is great Syrah! An iron fist in a velvet glove."



Fruitfed Supplies

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