Facts
Fruitfed Supplies
HORTICULTURE
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Domestic and export markets for quality Ohakune Brussels sprouts

New Zealand's main Brussels sprouts growing area is Ohakune, nestled under majestic Mt Ruapehu, with growers supplying a large proportion of the domestic market plus outlets in Japan and the United Kingdom.

Each year around 65ha of Brussels sprouts are grown around Ohakune, says Kath Lee-Jones, the area sales manager for Fruitfed Supplies. "On average, our three main growers – Brian and John Eades, Bruce and Steph Rollinson, and Murray and Marcia Taylor – produce five to seven tonnes per hectare."

All three growers have paddock-to-plate operations, growing, packing and marketing the finished product primarily for the New Zealand fresh produce market. Together, the three supply all North Island and some South Island outlets with loose or 500g packs of Brussels sprouts from February until mid-September.

Retailers in Japan and the UK also take fresh sprouts from New Zealand. Murray Taylor says exports to Japan have picked up since March's earthquake and tsunami. He notes there is definitely concern about possible nuclear contamination in vegetables grown around Tokyo, "but the increased demand from Japan also is due to our Ohakune Brussels sprouts being better quality than Australian crops which are also exported to Japan."

Over the past three years, from June until August, approximately five tonnes of Ohakune Brussels sprouts per week are air-freighted to Sainsbury's supermarkets in the UK with half sold fresh and half going into prepared meals. "Exports help take the pressure off possible oversupply to the domestic market," says Kath.

This season, Kath says the local crops have come through a dry spring and summer in good shape. "Disease pressure is low and all three growers used Durivo on their transplant seedlings; this has certainly kept insect damage to low levels during the early part of the season.

In the case of Durivo, Fruitfed's technical advisor Tim Herman conducted a trial in Ohakune with Brussels sprouts to test the product's efficacy before market introduction.

"The three growers use IPM protocols and stick to the brassica insecticide resistance strategy. This is aided by new products and advances in plant protection chemistry. We are continually looking at new products to make sure growers have access to the best options available."

Fruitfed Supplies introduced crop monitoring for brassicas into the

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Ohakune Brussels sprout growers Murray and Marcia Taylor

Bruce and Steph Rollinson check one of their Brussels sprout crops

Fruitfed experts monitor vegetable crops

With vegetable monitoring services currently operating in Hawke's Bay, Manawatu, Matamata and Pukekohe, Fruitfed Supplies' Crop Monitoring Service is considering expansion into other regions.

Hawke's Bay and Manawatu vegetable CMS coordinator Rena Mehrtens-Borell says that the present monitoring service covers a wide range of vegetable crops such as squash, potatoes, lettuce, onions and brassicas.

"We are always receptive to discussing the development of a monitoring service for other vegetable crops and in other regions," says Rena.

"While CMS has numerous industry-standard monitoring programmes, as well as protocols developed by our Fruitfed Technical team, these can also be customised to suit a grower's particular areas of concern – we're all about providing the information that growers need to make timely, well-informed decisions.

"Within the monitored blocks, we cover key pest and disease activity as well as beneficial insect activity, and reports are provided to growers within 15 minutes of our scout sending the field data to our centralised database via hand-held PDAs. As you'd expect, the timeliness, accuracy and consistent delivery of pest and disease numbers enables growers to be aware of a sudden outbreak or threshold breach and therefore target spray applications more efficiently," says Rena.

Rena adds: "Our central database, Tracit, takes into account all industry monitoring protocols and thresholds. The reports, therefore, provide relevant compliance information and the traceability that growers need to meet packhouse, exporter and customer specifications. We can also recall information from previous seasons, providing historical data and enable accurate pest pressure comparisons by season."

Growing demand for services in the Pukekohe region has seen the recent appointment of Daniel Sutton as regional coordinator for Pukekohe and Waikato. Daniel has experience in monitoring vegetable crops in the Manawatu and is looking forward to assisting growers in the region with their monitoring requirements.

Rena and Daniel – details below – are happy to discuss any queries regarding monitoring options for vegetable crops, or speak with your local Fruitfed Supplies field representative. **F**

Matamata and Pukekohe: Daniel Sutton – 027 4732381 or dsutton@fruitfedsupplies.co.nz

Hawkes Bay and Manawatu: Rena Mehrtens-Borell – 06 873 0959 or rmehrtensborell@fruitfedsupplies.co.nz

Improve winter weed control in vegetable brassicas

Goal™ 40WP is a residual herbicide for vegetable brassicas, applied immediately after transplanting that will provide good residual control of weeds at a time when the crop is slow growing.

The wettable powder formulation of Goal 40WP is specifically formulated to minimise crop injury whilst giving good weed control in vegetable brassicas, says David Lingan, regional manager for Etec Crop Solutions.

"Goal 40WP has residual activity on a wide range of broadleaf weeds, such as groundsel, cleavers, twin cress, speedwell and fumitory. It has very little contact action and, as such, needs to be applied to clean, weed-free ground," says David.

The residual activity of Goal WP lasts several weeks, especially in autumn and winter months, as the product degrades more quickly in summer's high UV conditions.

David notes that the use of Goal WP is particularly well suited during autumn and winter as moisture is more reliable during this period, which enhances the herbicidal activity.

Best use recommendations for Goal WP:

- Apply immediately after transplanting of cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower to a weed-free, well-prepared seedbed
- Rain or irrigation is required shortly after application, preferably within seven days, to activate the product and maximise residual weed control
- Do not use on sandy soil, or soils low in organic matter and CEC
- Do not mix surfactants or pesticides with Goal 40WP as crop selectivity can be impaired. **F**

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area ten years ago and growers are now able to monitor their own crops, with help from Kath when needed. Steph Rollinson and her staff monitor their crops every week for insect and disease pressure and apply sprays when threshold are reached.

Kath says: "Thresholds are low due to the plants' growth habit. Any damage to individual sprouts results in rejection, so numerous protocols are used to ensure pest damage is limited, such as putting out diamondback moth pheromone traps early in the season so we have a guide on when moth flights have occurred and can respond accordingly."

The three growers all agree that the ongoing work by seed companies with new variety breeding is an important key to better production.

"Improved breeding has developed sprouts that are sweeter tasting, not bitter, as well as providing improved varieties to cover different maturity dates," says Kath. "Growers can use up to a dozen varieties to successfully span the harvest season. Our team at Fruitfed Supplies works closely with seed companies and each year I help co-ordinate new variety trials with the growers. It can take three years of trials to know if a variety will be successful."

Brussels sprouts are traditionally handpicked, but Murray Taylor is in his fourth season using a mechanical harvester. Each year Murray has fine-tuned the planting density and mix of varieties suitable to be harvested mechanically.

Kath notes that all three operations grow a mix of other vegetables.

"Murray grows early potatoes and finishes these before the sprouts start. Brian Eades also grows potatoes and says vegetable crops work in well with pasture renovation for his extensive sheep and cattle farming operation. The harvested sprouts also provide good winter feed for cattle. The Rollinsons grow parsnips and Steph says this works really well for crop rotation. They work in with other potato and carrot growers in the area to lease suitable land."

The outlook is optimistic for Brussels sprouts, agree the three growers. Murray says: "If we can produce a quality product and deliver what the customer is asking in terms of packaging and size grading, then there will be a good future."

Steph says Brussels sprouts need to be marketed as a seasonal green winter vegetable, along the lines of spring marketing for asparagus. "We all urge people to give Brussels sprouts a try, no matter what your history with this vegetable is. The taste is sweeter than many people realise and sizes vary from small gourmet to larger. It's a versatile vegetable and there are many ways to prepare them. How about trying the following simple, tasty options? One is to slice the sprouts finely and sauté them with a little butter for two minutes, then add some chopped, cooked bacon, heat through and serve. Another is to steam whole Brussels sprouts until just tender and serve them with warmed Hollandaise sauce and chopped almonds. Delicious!" F

Vege Tech Bytes

A monthly technical update from **Tim Herman**, the Fruitfed Supplies regional technical adviser specialising in vegetable crops.

The wet autumn weather really brought out a range of queries on plant diseases and how to control of them over the last couple of months, so I have been busy working with our field representatives to identify control strategies that can assist their clients at this challenging time of year.

With persistent leaf wetness and reduced airflow, autumn and winter conditions can create the ideal conditions for disease to flourish. This often results in multiple pathogens colonising plant tissues, making identification of primary infection difficult. What is a primary pathogen in one sample may be a secondary pathogen in the next and vice versa, so it is very often money well spent having a definitive identification made by a plant pathologist, as the cost of treating the wrong pathogen may be significant in terms of lost crop.

Having robust protectant spray programmes at this time of year is imperative, as is taking a look at cultural control and fertiliser regimes as all can contribute to disease development. These may need to be adjusted for this time of year. Implementation at the time the crop is planted is better than 'fire-fighting' at a later stage. F

Quad Crossover net proven performer

The multi-purpose, diamond-profile knitted netting Synthesis Quad Crossover® is widely used throughout New Zealand with good reason – it offers affordable, effective protection for valuable crops.

One of several horticulture product lines under the Synthesis brand, Quad Crossover's strong, high density polyethylene fabric can be used in a variety of growing situations, from kiwifruit and pipfruit to cherries, blueberries and tamarillos.

Gale Pacific developed the Quad Crossover range over 20 years ago, as a crosspollination of hail and bird netting. The company's sales and marketing manger, Stewart Grainger, says Synthesis Quad Crossover has evolved into a structure net which is widely used in New Zealand and around the world.

"Synthesis nets won't rot or absorb moisture and Quad Crossover's innovative diamond lock-stitch with 4-yarn crossover, deters even the smallest birds and protects crops against damaging hail storms while allowing bees to do their critical task of pollination," notes Stewart.

The microclimate formed under a Quad Crossover canopy offers tangible benefits in addition to protecting the crop. "Water savings up to 40% due to reduced evaporation via transpiration and reduced spray drift are two factors that are welcome in many growing situations. Improved fruit colour adds a further quality benefit to the improved yield."

Quad Crossover comes in a range of net apertures to allow for the appropriate photo-synthetically active radiation (PAR) levels required by a specific crop. Different net widths also suit different situations. The standard colours are black and white and other colours can be made on request. Stewart notes: "Experimentation with colours – including red, blue, black, clear, white and grey – over the years has standardised with a geographical predominance of grey in the South Island and white in the north."

With winter being the dormant period for most crops and therefore being the most common time to erect protective structures, Stewart says growers may wish to contact their local Fruitfed Supplies representative for details of a professional installer in their district. **F**

Quad Crossover® is a registered trademark of Gale Pacific (New Zealand) Ltd.

Omnia has only registered **European canker control** option

Eurogel and Greenseal Ultra™ from Omnia combine to provide pipfruit growers with a robust European canker control package.

European canker (*Neonectria galligena*) disease is favoured by high rainfall. In New Zealand districts where the disease is established, it is a serious problem, says Dr. Adrian Spiers, the company's technical manager.

"European canker kills spurs and branches, reducing fruit wood, spoiling tree shape and, when left untreated, can girdle the main stem and kill the tree," says Adrian. "The innoculum is always present, so good control of European canker is not something that can achieved quickly. Several years of prolonged and sustained efforts throughout the season may be required to reach and maintain a high level of control of this aggressive disease."

Two Omnia products – Eurogel and Greenseal Ultra – are registered to help combat European canker. Adrian explains: "Eurogel contains highly active fungicides and a bactericide specifically formulated to control European canker. It also contains unique penetrants which assist the movement of fungicide into the plant tissue. Greenseal Ultra has a unique acrylic resin base which contains two active fungicide ingredients and a bactericide."

A new Omnia technical bulletin about European canker highlights a robust strategy to control the disease using Eurogel and Greenseal Ultra.

Adrian says: "The bulletin is available from your local Fruitfed Supplies representative and the main point to note at this time of year is that all pruning wounds and sites where European canker has been removed should always be painted with a generous coating of Greenseal Ultra. Remember to pay particular attention to large wounds made to main branches and the trunk, and remove and burn or bury all infected material."

Eurogel should also be applied as spray post-harvest to protect fresh leaf-fall sites. Year-round checking for and removal of infected twigs and cankers is also important. Greenseal Ultra or Eurogel can be used as the wound dressing, providing additional fungicidal and bactericidal protection. **F**

Eurogel is registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. P8380.
Greenseal Ultra™ is registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. P8180.

Greenseal Ultra™ aids overall orchard health

Proper attention to the pruning process, including the application of a suitable wound dressing like Greenseal Ultra, is vital to overall orchard health.

The sustainability of pipfruit, stonefruit, kiwifruit, grapes and olive blocks is often determined by fungal pathogens which enter via pruning wounds.

Omnia territory manager Bruce Gemmell says several major diseases of fruit trees which cause significant production losses can largely be controlled by ensuring Greenseal Ultra is applied to pruning wounds.

"The control of diseases such as silverleaf in pip and stonefruit, stem cankering in pipfruit, shoot stunting and dieback in grapes, stem and trunk rots and swollen stem in kiwifruit and bacterial stem knot in olives all starts with the application of a wound dressing like Greenseal Ultra.

"Not only does Greenseal Ultra give up to three months' protection to enable the plant time to form a defence zone just below the wound surface, its added fungicides and bactericide are active against a range of fungi and bacteria which colonise wood and cause these significant diseases. Greenseal Ultra's tough acrylic resin also encourages callusing to ensure rapid wound closure."

Greenseal Ultra is available in two and ten-litre containers and free applicators are supplied, one for every two litres purchased at Fruitfed Supplies, so talk to your local Fruitfed representative for more details.

Top tips for effective wound protection with Greenseal Ultra

- **Prune on suitable days**
  Sunshine and low humidity conditions are ideal for rapid drying of the wound dressing and minimal post cut innoculum build-up. Avoid applying in damp conditions.
- **Apply Greenseal Ultra on the same day as pruning**
  Humidity rises at night and spore release may occur, infecting untreated wounds.
- **Apply generously**
  Apply a thick, even coat of Greenseal Ultra, right to the edge of the wound to get the best protection. Most bacterial and fungal infections of wood are most active in the wet winter period.
- **All wounds** that require secateurs to remove branches require dressing with Greenseal Ultra.
- **Protect the main stem**
  Pay extra attention to any pruning wounds made on the main stem. This is a vital part of the tree and may be the basis for a new canopy or a grafting opportunity.
- **Copper and paint**
  Never add copper to paint or apply copper directly to wounds as it inhibits the natural wound healing response.
- **Other fungicides**
  Stirred-in fungicides or 'cocktails' may not have adjuvants or penetrants required for maximum activity and remember, these home brews are not registered. **F**

Greenseal Ultra™ is registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, No. P8180.

TECH-KNOW TIPS

AVOCADO

Reminders for June:

- ✔ Pest populations should generally be low in June, but keep a watch for populations of **greenhouse thrips** and **leafroller**, which can continue to cause damage through early winter months, particularly if weather remains relatively warm and settled.
- ✔ Flare-ups of **six-spotted mite** are often noted in April and May, and this pest is often a problem in winter and early spring months, particularly in the north. A programme of DC Tron Plus applications through winter is a useful means of suppressing SSM going into spring, providing full spray coverage is achieved.
- ✔ If **soil sampling** has not already been carried out, this should be done as soon as possible. Analysis and implementation of a fertiliser programme now gives ample time for the applied nutrients to assist current crop development, while preparing trees for coming flowering and fruit-set periods.
- ✔ Avocados are susceptible to **frost** (see photo). Ensure adequate frost protection is in place, particularly on young trees and/or higher altitude or colder areas. Options include overhead watering, wind machine, frost covers on young trees, or application of low-biuret urea. For details on the best frost protection system to suit your situation, please contact your local Fruitfed Supplies representative.

Frost-damaged leaves and fruit on a mature Hass avocado tree

Foliar nitrogen, e.g. Yara Safe-N or low-biuret (max 0.4%) urea, may need to be applied to remedy nitrogen deficiencies that often show as yellowing foliage through winter. This issue is more common on trees that have been fertilised inadequately through autumn into winter and/or are carrying a heavy crop. Urea is the most efficient form of nitrogen for leaf absorption, but biuret levels must be noted. Biuret is a nitrogenous impurity formed during urea manufacture which is phyto-toxic to plants, particularly in foliar-application situations. Biuret levels in urea should therefore be considered carefully when applying foliar applications to avocados. International data also shows that foliar applications of urea may increase avocado plants' resistance to frost damage in light frosts. Magnesium sulphate (epsom salts) may also be added to improve leaf-greening as required.

CITRUS

Reminders for June:

- Watch for **greenhouse thrips** as they will still be evident throughout autumn and early winter, especially in the warmer northern regions and on late-harvest varieties. Low populations of GHT may remain through winter months, causing an accumulation of feeding damage over time. **Kelly's citrus thrips** and **citrus red mite** may also still be present, particularly if the weather remains warm. Please contact your Fruitfed Supplies branch for control options if these pests are present.
- **Brown rot** may infect healthy fruit pre-harvest, especially if conditions are wet (see photo). Control with Kocide Opti, Blue Shield or Dithane Rainshield.
- Consider application of **Perk Supa** in autumn to strengthen plants and improve disease resistance.

Brown rot on fruit (photo courtesy Keith Pyle)

- June and July are also the optimum time to take **soil tests**, to determine fertiliser programmes for the coming season. Please contact your Fruitfed Supplies branch for details.

GRAPES

Reminders for June:

- Avoid pruning vines during rain or when rainfall is imminent. Apply a suitable wound dressing, such as **Greenseal Ultra,** after vines have been pruned. Consider burning pruning's as they may later become a source of innoculum for diseases like Eutypa.
- Endeavour to prune blocks that exhibit symptoms of wood diseases first, as spore production is often lower in early winter.
- **Mulching** pruning's is another option and helps return nutrients and organic matter to the soil. It also speeds up the breakdown of pruning's, reducing potential disease carry over.
- The application of a product that promotes the break down of **organic matter** on the soil surface, such as Digester, may help improve soil structure and enhance the release of nutrients into the soil to be used by the vines.
- Fruitfed Supplies representatives will be taking **soil tests** during the month of June. These tests are an important step to ensure vines achieve optimal nutrient status. Be mindful of excessive nitrogen readings as this can lead to an increase in the susceptibility of leaves to powdery mildew.

At the end of the growing season the tendency may be to relax with vineyard disease management protocols. But wood-invading diseases, like black dead arm and dying arm diseases such as *Botryosphaeria stevensii* and Eutypa lata, can infect vines during winter months. These both have the ability to invade healthy vines through unprotected pruning wounds. Rainfall releases spores, which are carried by wind and washed onto the cuts. The spores then germinate on cut surfaces and grow into healthy wood. The most obvious symptoms are visible in early spring – leaves are yellow, small and cupped, often tattered with scorched margins. These are followed by signs of progressive cane dieback and canopy decline with significant production losses occurring.

As with all grapevine diseases, preventative control is the key to successfully managing these diseases. If practicable, ensure pruning takes place during dry weather and apply a suitable wound dressing, like Greenseal Ultra™, to significant cuts soon after they are made. Apply wound dressings in an even coat across the surface and ensure it extends to the margins of the cut. If your vines display symptoms of wood-invading diseases, infected wood should be removed and burnt, particularly all wood older than one year. For more information, contact your local Fruitfed Supplies branch.

KIWIFRUIT

Reminders for June:

- Following harvest, in preparation for winter pruning, many growers use products to **promote leaf drop** in their vines. Copper-based products such as Bordeaux mixture have historically been used for this purpose, although copper sulphate is now more commonly used. For further details, please contact your local Fruitfed Supplies branch.
- During leaf-drop, apply **copper** products, such as Kocide Opti, Blue Shield or Champ Flo, prior to rainfall events. These protect leaf scars from fungal and bacterial pathogens which may enter the plant through natural openings such as leaf scars. With only protectant activity, apply your selected copper product prior to rainfall events. Recent data has shown that these copper formulations resist rainfall quite well, so rainfastner products are likely to be of little benefit. However, the use of spreaders such as Du-Wett or Omniwett will assist full coverage – an important consideration for product efficacy – of all parts of the vines.
- Several winter jobs should also be underway, such as servicing/replacing **pruning gear** ready for the pruning season, checking **kiwifruit structures** and carrying out repairs, and preparing for any block conversions/new plantings. Fruitfed Supplies can provide all these products. Please contact your local branch for details.
- **Soil tests** will be carried out by Fruitfed Supplies representatives in June and July and are the critical first step to plan the coming season's fertiliser programme. If you wish to discuss soil testing, please contact your local Fruitfed Supplies branch, as there are important protocols to be observed this season to limit the risk of spreading Psa.

Fruit exhibiting water-staining prior to harvest

If harvesting late in the season, **water stain** on fruit is likely to become a major issue as the canopy breaks down and weather deteriorates. A relatively small gain in the volume of packed trays is all that is required to economically justify the application of a stain remover. Research by Fruitfed Supplies Technical team combined with growers' field experience over close to 20 years, has demonstrated Kiwilustre's effectiveness as a stain remover. It is very effective when used correctly and treated fruit do not re-stain in storage, which was an issue with older formulations containing citric acid. Kiwilustre's formulation also gives increased protection against re-staining in the field if rain occurs after application but before fruit are picked. Du-Wett Stainless is also now available, allowing application of stain removal products like Kiwilustre at reduced water rates and allowing the sprayer to cover blocks faster, more efficiently and more economically. Treated fruit also dry rapidly, an important consideration leading in to harvest. Application methods are very important to get the best from any stain-removal product. For further information, please contact your Fruitfed Supplies branch.

 For further information on any of the products or practices covered in Tech-Know Tips, please contact your local Fruitfed Supplies representative.

PIPFRUIT

Reminders for June:

- ✔ Foliar applications of urea promote the breakdown of leaves during winter months, thereby reducing the carryover of **black spot** innoculum. BioStart Digester, in combination with reduced rates of urea, applied to leaf litter on the orchard floor is also effective in reducing black spot innoculum in your orchard.
- ✔ If monitoring has identified **European canker** in your orchard, the correctly-timed applications of a suitable protectant fungicide, such as Eurogel, during leaf-fall period. Apply fungicides in anticipation of rainfall events.
- ✔ With winter **pruning** now underway, ensure pruning wounds are protected by applying a suitable wound dressing, such as Greenseal Ultra, as soon as possible, preferably on the same day.
- ✔ June and July are also the optimum months to take **soil tests** to determine fertiliser programs for the coming season. Correct soil pH is vital in apple production. If your pH is low, apply lime now.
- ✔ Autumn is an important period for **controlling problem perennial weeds** to reduce the carryover into next season. Correct application should provide a relatively weed-free strip through until spring. Contact your local Fruitfed Supplies store to discuss the most effective weed control programme for your orchard.

Black spot, Venturia inaequalis, on apple leaf

If crop monitoring or harvest assessments have identified **black spot** at levels exceeding thresholds in your blocks, the leaf-fall period presents a good opportunity to reduce disease pressure at the start of the next season.

Foliar applications of urea during the leaf-fall period promote leaf breakdown during winter months, thereby reducing the black spot innoculum loading carried forward into next season. Another effective option is to spray leaf litter on the orchard floor with a combination of Digester and urea. Digester is a balanced formulation of biologically-produced enzymes, metabolites and organic acids designed to accelerate the breakdown of crop residue. Research studies conducted by Fruitfed Supplies Technical in Hawke's Bay showed that Digester in combination with urea accelerated leaf litter decomposition more rapidly than either product applied alone, confirming what has also been also been demonstrated in overseas studies. Raking leaves from under trees into middle of the rows, and then mulching and/or stock grazing are also useful means of reducing resident innoculum levels. For further information on products, rates and optimum timing, contact your local Fruitfed Supplies branch.

SUMMERFRUIT

Reminders for June:

- ✔ The application of **copper** during the period from harvest to complete leaf-fall is vital to protect leaf scars from bacterial disease infection.
- ✔ June and July are also the optimum months to take soil tests to determine fertiliser programmes for the coming season. Correct soil pH is vital in stonefruit production. If your soil pH is low, apply lime now.
- With winter **pruning** now underway, ensure pruning wounds are protected by applying a suitable wound dressing, such as Greenseal Ultra, as soon as possible, preferably on the same day.
- Autumn is an important period for **controlling problem perennial weeds** to reduce weed numbers surviving the winter period. Correct application should provide a relatively weed-free strip through until spring. Contact your local Fruitfed Supplies store to discuss the most effective weed control programme for your orchard.

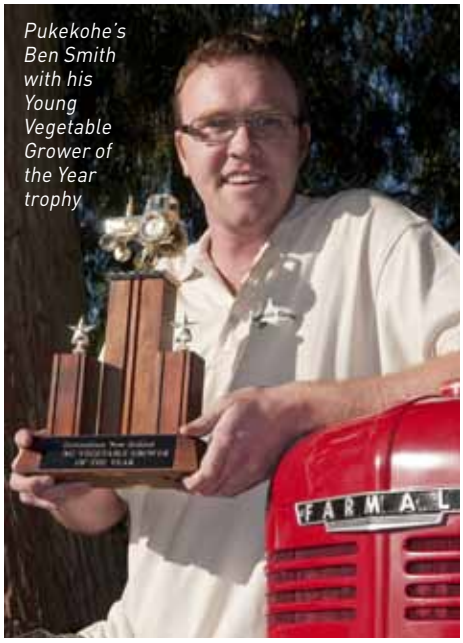
Now is the right time to correct **soil pH**. Liming materials, such as agricultural lime and/or dolomite, should be applied during winter if soil pH is too low. The correct soil pH level is important as this influences the availability of plant nutrients in the soil.

One source of lime, ground limestone, consists of calcium carbonate and variable proportions of impurities. Calcium, like nitrogen, phosphate, potash, sulphur, magnesium and others, is one of the essential elements required especially by growing tissue in roots and shoots. The actual quantity of lime required depends on the base soil level of calcium and the percentage of calcium saturation.

The situation may arise on some soils where pH is relatively high (6.5 or more), but soil calcium is low. In this case, Gypsum, an alternative calcium fertiliser, which has no effect on pH, is an ideal substitute. Gypsum has the added benefit of improving soil structure, especially in heavier soil types. If you would like a soil test taken and to discuss fertiliser strategies, contact your local Fruitfed Supplies branch.

Richard Bawden
contributes for avocados, citrus and kiwifruit

Paul Hassan
contributes for grapes, pipfruit and stonefruit


Pukekohe's Ben Smith with his Young Vegetable Grower of the Year trophy

Young Auckland grower cream of the crop

The title of New Zealand's Young Vegetable Grower 2011 was awarded to Ben Smith from Pukekohe on 12 May.

This year's Young Vegetable Grower competition was held at a farm near Christchurch with the day-long event involving a variety of challenges such as tractor driving and ploughing, grading vegetables, assembling a pump and writing a marketing plan.

Twenty-nine year old Ben Smith became the fifth winner of Young Vegetable Grower title since the inaugural competition in 2008. Ben is a grower manager for Status Produce and oversees a 5.5 ha glasshouse producing specialty tomatoes 52 weeks a year mainly for the domestic market.

Ben wins a trip to Australia to visit and learn from various vegetable producers, as well as the opportunity to compete for the Young Grower of the Year title, a national competition which features Fruitfed Supplies as one of its major supporters. The battle for the prestigious title of Young Grower of the Year sees Ben pitted against the yet-to-be-decided Young Fruit Grower during the annual Horticulture New Zealand Conference in Rotorua on 25 July.

Ben, who holds a Bachelor of Science majoring in Horticultural Science and an Executive Diploma in Produce Marketing (Distinction), said the experience was a rewarding one. "It was great to be able to show to my family, friends and workmates how much I've learnt during my time as a grower. I think I've really proved myself and I'm looking forward to competing at the national competition."


This year's top three (L-R): Troy Matthews, Ben Smith and David Winter

Second place went to David Winter and fellow Cantabrian Troy Matthews was placed third.

Competition co-coordinator Graham Martin says that the national competition offers young people in the industry a chance to prove their talent and gain recognition for it.

"It's an opportunity to celebrate excellence in the young people we have working in horticulture. Horticulture New Zealand recognises that supporting young growers and creating opportunities for them is necessary to ensure the success and growth of the industry. Young growers like Ben prove that the horticulture industry will be in safe hands for the future." **F**

DIARY DATES

SILVER SECATEURS

The Silver Secateurs competition is designed to encourage and recognise best practice in this very important discipline for the grape growing industry.

SILVER SECATEURS HAWKE'S BAY

1 July

Mission Estate Winery, Taradale

More details from info@winehawkesbay.co.nz or phone Wine Hawke's Bay on 06 876 3418

SILVER SECATEURS NATIONAL GRAPE VINE PRUNING COMPETITION

27 August 2011

Villa Maria Estate, Auckland

Run in conjunction with the Romeo Bragato conference.

More details from karen@attend.net.nz

Assembling a chainsaw was one of the tests for the Young Vegetable Grower competitors

Fruitfed Supplies

Facts is a monthly publication of Fruitfed Supplies, the horticultural division of PGG Wrightson Ltd. Feedback to the editor, Kate Gordon, is welcome (email kate@relishcomm.co.nz or mobile 021 587 227). For address updates, please advise your local Fruitfed Supplies branch (refer to Branch Location page on **www.fruitfed.co.nz**) or contact the Fruitfed Supplies national office (phone 09 448 0510 or email jayne.bosher@fruitfedsupplies.co.nz).