













AONGATETE
advanced horticulture

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Newsletter

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Season Update

2012 is sure to bring many challenges to the orchard gate and hopefully ones that we have now developed across the industry skills to deal with. The Katikati region seems to have been spared the rapid progression of Psa that other growing regions have experienced, partly I believe that this is related to the dry warm weather we experienced during October and November, the geography of our region, the advice and experience gained from our fellow growers in Te Puke and from the research being delivered nationally and internationally. However, it is not a time to be complacent, maintaining orchard hygiene, regular monitoring and application of protectants and elicitors should by now be part of your regular orchard practice. We note that an elicitor (actiguard) applied in mid November was still detectable in fruit sampled on 23rd December, whether the levels in plant leaves were sufficient to be still maintaining adequate protection is not known but certainly the persistence of these products is substantial. I have written an article on "Understanding plants responses to various chemicals in a Psa Environment" which can be found on our web site at www.coolstore.co.nz/news.html which provides some insights to plant response mechanisms to insect and disease attack and how the plant responds biochemically.

We had an excellent pollination period this season with warm dry conditions and have noted that fruit size and elongation (well pollinated) is good especially with the recent rain. We trunk girdled (and treated with a Nordox solution for Psa protection) and have seen a resultant canopy response. We will commence a second girdling round in early February to assist dry matter accumulation.

In general we are carrying a heavier crop this season across both Hort 16A and Hayward orchards with some excellent results in the making. I put this down primarily to timing, and focus on getting the right job done at the right time. Our G3 & G9 crops are clean but the G14 is carrying slightly less fruit and lighter canopies.

All our male pruning was completed prior to the new year and we are now nearing completion of thinning and summer canopy work. If you are in doubt about where you are with your orchard and require any assistance please give Matt Nelson or your Grower Services Rep a call. We do have capacity to assist you with skilled labour so you can optimise the rest of the growing season.

We have observed a significant leaf roller pressure in our monitoring and also passion vine hopper appearance. By the sound the cicada population is evident and you should be looking to monitor and spray for these pests if you suspect they are present in your orchard. Please contact Margaret Miller if you need a pest monitor. We are going to trial a biological for cicada and passion vine hopper this year as the sooty mould problems (or worse Psa entry through chewing wounds) can quickly result in increased reject rates.

I note that a lot of Growers are battening down the hatches on expenses and would remind you that a \$1000 spend now with judicious and timely action in the orchard ...



..can save \$5000 or \$10,000 at harvest.

Our Grower Services Reps are on the road with the Aongatete Packing Proposal for the coming harvest season. We are well underway with our planning for the harvest and will again have a team of RSE workers assisting with our harvest. I look forward to seeing a successful completion to the growing season and the fruit flowing across the grader.

Alan Thorn - Grower Services Manager

A Word from One of our Trustees - Wyn Daniell

Trustees met in December to review the distribution of ACL grower pool income. They discharged their requirement to; review the rules for the Trust, as set out in the 2012 ACL Picking Packing and Coolstorage document, and to negotiate the terms where applicable. The resultant proposal is currently being distributed amongst growers.

With the festive season concluded, growers look to the fast approaching harvest, responding to the climatic conditions in austere economic times. We hope Zespri will perform well in all the other aspects they manage that impact on grower viability. The issues are complex too;

- Will G3 be sufficiently PSA tolerant to provide a substitute for Hort 16A and if so what mechanism is equitable to make G3 available?
- Green growers, conscious that with continuing economic stagnation in Europe, retail prices are unlikely to increase, know Zespri need trim cost between the orchard gate and consumer, for growing to be sustainable.
- A concern that Zespri is primarily interested in marketing fruit grown on varieties for which they / we own the Plant Variety Rights is another issue beyond individual grower influence, but of considerable importance.

Wyn Daniell - Trustee Member

Niwa Weather Outlook tools on KVH website

KVH has a weather forecast tool from NIWA on their website. You must register on the website to log-on as it is only accessible on the grower-only pages. Go to <http://www.kvh.org.nz/registration>. This tool enables growers to view weather events impacting High Risk Areas and Priority Zones and to pinpoint the direction of potential aerosol flow out of these regions, in response to these weather events. There are also seasonal, climatic three-month outlooks and the new 'air parcel streamline forecast plots' for two and six-day periods across all growing regions. It is vital growers can access information when orchards may be more at risk of Psa-V infection through weather events. Check it out!

Class II Payments

Last year we were able to pay Class II proceeds in January but unfortunately this year we are not able to. The reason for this is that the very late finishing season has meant all the payments have not yet been received from Australia. The Class II pool works on the bases of all remitted fund being pooled and after costs, paid to growers in proportion to their contribution.

Nell Dawson
Operations Manager

Website Training for Beginners

The Katikati Community Resource Centre is offering one-on-one basic KVH website training for those who need website help or would like to learn more. People are welcome to drop into the Katikati Community Resource Centre at 45 Beach Road, Katikati from Monday to Thursday between 9:30am and 3:00pm. Ask for Shirley Martelli. KVH is also looking at the availability of similar sessions for beginner web users in other grower regions. These will be advised in the *Psa Bulletin* as soon as locations and dates are confirmed.

Orchard Overview with Matt

First of all I would like to wish all the Growers a happy New Year, and hope that your orchards' are looking good after what has been a very difficult few months of wind, rain, sun, and a lot more rain. At this time our Kiwifruit canopies should be complete, stable and nicely open.

The key things to watch for are in both Green and Gold is:

- A minimum number of growing tips as these growing tips are competing with the fruit for dry matter and will not be contributing anything essential to the plants. These growing tips can be controlled with a quick round of squeeze tipping.
- Late grown shoots should be broken out and removed with no areas of heavily shaded leaves
- Thick spots in the canopy can be seen by the heavy shadows cast on the ground below and in extreme cases a lack of grass cover. These bays or areas should be thinned out by zero leaf pruning the tangled fruiting laterals and removing excess replacement wood.
- Gold fruiting canopies can be allowed to close over slightly towards the end of the season to help with the de-greening process.
- Leaf colour and condition should be healthy
- Leaves should be green, flexible and thick to the touch.
- There should be an absolute minimum of dead leaf in the canopy and no leaf drop.
- If you are not happy that it looks as good as it should, talk to Margaret Miller of me about a possible foliar program.
- Next year's fruiting wood should be well lit with the leaves on these growths in the full sun
- Strung canopies should have a cane on every string and these should be well on the way up the strings by now.

Kiwifruit canopies should be settled, in the sun, producing lots of carbohydrates for dry matter and size going into the fruit. Next year's fruiting wood should be mostly in place and in the sun. There should be some carbohydrates going off to stored reserves for the spring start up and NOT MUCH ELSE should be happening.

Male Pruning

Male plants of both Green and Gold will be growing quite vigorously now. The cane growth should be either broken out or stubbed very short.

Weak spur growth close to the leader or permanent arms of the male is the most ideal growth for your males.

As with all cuts we make in our canopies, we must protect them from PSA, so have a small bottle or container with a trigger pack and spray a low rate of KocideOpti or

Nordox to ensure protection.

Trunk Girdling

This is the \$64 thousand dollar question this season. We know that Trunk Girdling is has become a normal part of orchard management in both Green and Gold and there is more than one advantageous response to applying the technique.

The benefits include;

- Trunk Girdling can increase dry matter.
- Trunk Girdling can give a significant increase in fresh weight.
- Trunk Girdling can advance maturity
- Trunk Girdling can reduce the variation
- Trunk Girdling can increase return bloom.
- Trunk Girdling can reduce vigor.

How does it work?

The theory is that the girdle prevents the flow of carbohydrates from the canopy to the roots making the fruit more competitive in the allocation of carbohydrate within the plant for the short time the girdle is open. The technique involves removing a strip of bark tissue and the subtending cambium layer, around the whole circumference of the trunk.

Use a hand held chainsaw chain, much like a garrote to remove the bulk of the material and then clean out the cut with a girdling knife or screwdriver.

The cut must be deep enough to remove the cambium layer between the bark and the wood and avoid cutting into the wood.

The cut is usually 4.5mm (or 3/16th") wide. This allows enough time for the carbohydrates to accumulate above the girdle, but will still callus over and heal relatively quickly.

Always apply the girdle at a comfortable height on the trunk and use a straight and round part of the trunk.

Always use a fresh site on the trunk for each new girdle where possible and if you are using an existing girdle site, select the oldest one first.

Try and leave the cut neat and tidy and make sure the wound remains a clean white colour when properly cut to the wood, but quickly oxidises to brown if the cambium is not properly removed. Girdles should be checked after the initial cut to make sure that the cambium layer has been completely removed.

A properly applied girdle will heal relatively quickly when applied in summer and autumn. The healing is characterised by healthy greenish callus growing out from each side of the cut. This should be able to be seen starting a week to ten days after girdling. Sterilise the girdling tools by soaking in mentholated spirits or Envirosan between each vine, and scrub the chains with a wire brush at every break. Trunk girdling severely ...

...stressed vines may hasten their demise. This may not be a bad thing in the case of armillaria as it will force the replacement of vines that are at risk in your production system. Vines that are showing symptoms of water stress should not be trunk girdled.

Risks and Precautions for 2012:

Generally trunk girdling has proved to be a reasonably safe and reliable technique when applied correctly.

However it would make sense to observe some precautions:

- Do not trunk girdle young vines until they have achieved a full canopy.
- If the trunks of the young vines are a very small diameter, such as in a double planted orchard, the trunk girdle should be applied with a girdling knife rather than a chain.
- Sterilise the girdling tools by soaking in methylated spirits or Enviro-san between each vine, and scrub the chains with a wire brush at every break. Trunk girdling severely stressed vines may hasten their demise. This may not be a bad thing in the case of armillaria as it will force the replacement of vines that are at risk in your production system. Vines that are showing symptoms of water stress should not be trunk girdled.

Timing

- Autumn trunk girdle should be early enough to provide the required effect prior to harvest and to have the girdle fully healed before winter. Usually this is around the middle of February.
- Girdling is a cheap little exercise to carry out to achieve a return of several thousands of dollars per hectare.

Summary

With the Harvest on a few weeks away now, please ensure that your load out pads have been weed sprayed, if they require a load of metal spread over them, then please do it. The costs to ACL to wash bins and the cost of lost fruit out of the tops of bins due to soil and debris is significant.

This season has been another one for the record books, but together we can all get through and hopefully nurse our vines through this incredibly difficult time.

Matt Nelson - Field Technical Manager

Rates Help for Reduced Land Value

Kiwifruit orchardists or any ratepayer whose land value has been affected by Psa-V can apply for a re-valuation which will be used to set their rates next year. For more information, contact the Rates Team on (07) 571 8008 or email customerservice@westernbay.govt.nz.

Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme

ACL's Grower Services Representative, Andrew Dawson, has been accepted into the Kellogg Rural Leaders Programme. This is a great opportunity for Andrew, who has a commerce degree and a



post-graduate diploma in marketing from Lincoln University. This 11 month programme is made up of residential workshops, seminars and personal study and aims to develop emerging agribusiness leaders to help shape the future of New Zealand agribusiness and rural affairs. Andrew has been sponsored by Zespri and we wish him well in his studies. Andrew will continue working whilst completing this programme but note that he will be on annual leave between the 15th to 30th January.

Spray Coverage Videos

Two new videos about spray are on the YouTube channel through the KVH website at:

- *Assessing Spray coverage 2—Summer Canopy* at www.kvh.org.nz/how_to_spray.
- *Assessing Spray coverage 3—Canopy Management* at www.kvh.org.nz/how_to_spray.

Fruit Damage - Mowing & Mulching

Just a reminder to our Growers who carry out their own mowing and mulching to keep the flap down on their mowers as any mulching spray may have a sand-blasting effect on the fruit. We have heard of some cases where Growers have done this accidentally and this may have a consequence on fruit quality come packing time.

Up & Coming Events:

Thursday 26th January 4pm-5pm, ACL Drop-in Discussion Group Meeting
Thursday 9th February 4pm-5pm, ACL Drop-in Discussion Group Meeting

Technical Update with Margaret

Psa Monitoring

A reminder to all growers to continue to be vigilant, early detection is key to protecting your assets. Try to monitor at least 25% of your orchard each week. Expression from the infection period over the December period will be showing up as leaf spotting, with or without halos. Don't hesitate to contact Margaret if you have any worries.

Kiwigreen Monitoring:

If you would like your orchard to be monitored for Leafroller or Scale please contact **Margaret Miller** – Margaret@coolstore.co.nz.

ACL's 2011 Grower Christmas Function

Held on the 6th December and hosted by Allan & Nell Dawson and the ACL team, our 2011 Grower Christmas Party was a relaxing evening spent with our Growers. We look forward to working with our Growers as we approach the next harvest season.

Thanks to our Growers for joining us, Julie for playing on the piano and Fairview Resort (previously Resort Pacifica).



Positions Available

We are accepting job applications now for seasonal workers, if you are interested or know of someone who is please contact us! We are also looking for a few accommodation properties with 6 month contracts. Please phone or email us 07 552 0916 enquiries@coolstore.co.nz.



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