

# *Australian* *STONEFRUIT GROWER*

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*'Australian Stonefruit Grower' is the official publication of Summerfruit Australia Ltd & Low Chill Australia Inc. – the industry bodies representing the interests of Australian stone fruit growers.*



To find out more about Summerfruit Australia Ltd, check out the website: [www.summerfruit.com.au](http://www.summerfruit.com.au)



## 2010-2011 Board

### **Ian McAlister (Chair)**

PO Box 430  
Lake Boga VIC 3584  
Phone: 03 5037 2730  
Fax: 03 5057 2730  
Mobile: 0427 641 323  
[chair@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:chair@summerfruit.com.au)

### **Fred Baronio (Deputy Chair)**

PO Box 76  
The Summit QLD 4377  
Phone: 07 4683 2286  
Fax: 07 4683 2466  
Mobile: 0427 132 456  
[fredbaronio@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:fredbaronio@summerfruit.com.au)

### **Andrew Smith**

182 Baileys Road  
Wangaratta VIC 3678  
Phone: 03 5725 7339  
Fax: 03 5725 7335  
Mobile: 0427 257 339  
[andrewsmith@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:andrewsmith@summerfruit.com.au)



### **Adrian Conti**

482 Campbell Road  
Cobram VIC 3644  
Fax: 03 5872 2915  
Mobile: 0418 302 873  
[adrianconti@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:adrianconti@summerfruit.com.au)

### **Mike Oakley**

133-137 Brown Mountain Road  
Campania TAS 7026  
Phone: 03 6260 4463  
Fax: 03 6260 4455  
Mobile: 0438 271 848  
[mikeoakley@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:mikeoakley@summerfruit.com.au)

### **Mark Wilkinson**

Sunpick Orchards  
291 Sultana Rd East  
Maida Vale 6057 WA  
Mobile: 0427 989 121  
[sunpick@highway1.com.au](mailto:sunpick@highway1.com.au)

### **Raymond Hick**

Heavenly Valley Farms  
PO Box 188  
Bangalow NSW 2479  
Mobile: 0408 477 959  
[heavenlyvalleyfarms@gmail.com](mailto:heavenlyvalleyfarms@gmail.com)



# LOW CHILL AUSTRALIA INC.

ABN 283 812 712 44

## 2010-2011 COMMITTEE

### PRESIDENT

**Ray Hick**

P: 02 6687 2044, F: 02 6687 0712, M: 0408 477 959

E: [president@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:president@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### VICE PRESIDENT

**Ross Stuhmcke**

P: 07 5462 5202, F: 07 5462 5333, M: 0413 179 133

E: [vice.president@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:vice.president@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### SECRETARY

**Greg Nash**

P: 02 6687 1756, M: 0418 440 545

E: [secretary@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:secretary@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### TREASURER

**Greg Foster**

P: 02 6687 1295, M: 0407 871 756

E: [treasurer@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:treasurer@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

**Mark Napper**

P: 02 9997 6251, M: 0413 007 197

E: [mark.napper@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:mark.napper@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

**Geoff Prior**

P: 02 6687 1768, F: 02 6687 1768, M: 0427 213 570

E: [geoff.prior@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:geoff.prior@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

**Gordon Schultz**

P: 02 6687 1391, F: 02 6687 1391, M: 0437 952 727

E: [gordon.schultz@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:gordon.schultz@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### COMMITTEE MEMBER

**Pat Wibaux**

P: 07 5442 1403, F: 07 5442 2489, M: 0419 026 086

E: [pat.wibaux@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:pat.wibaux@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

### CONTACTS -

#### *Low Chill Australia Inc.*

#### Office Address:

PO Box 188, BANGALOW NSW 2479

Phone: (02) 6687 2044

Mobile: 0408 477 959

Fax: (02) 6687 0712

Email: [president@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:president@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

Website: [www.lowchillaustralia.com.au](http://www.lowchillaustralia.com.au)

#### Communications Manager:

PO Box 772, HERVEY BAY QLD 4655

Phone: (07) 4128 0585

Mobile: 0407 589 445

Email: [cm@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:cm@lowchillaustralia.com.au)

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### CONTACTS -



**Summerfruit Australia Ltd** - ACN 105 962 196

**John Moore** – CEO

8/452 Swift Street, Albury NSW 2640

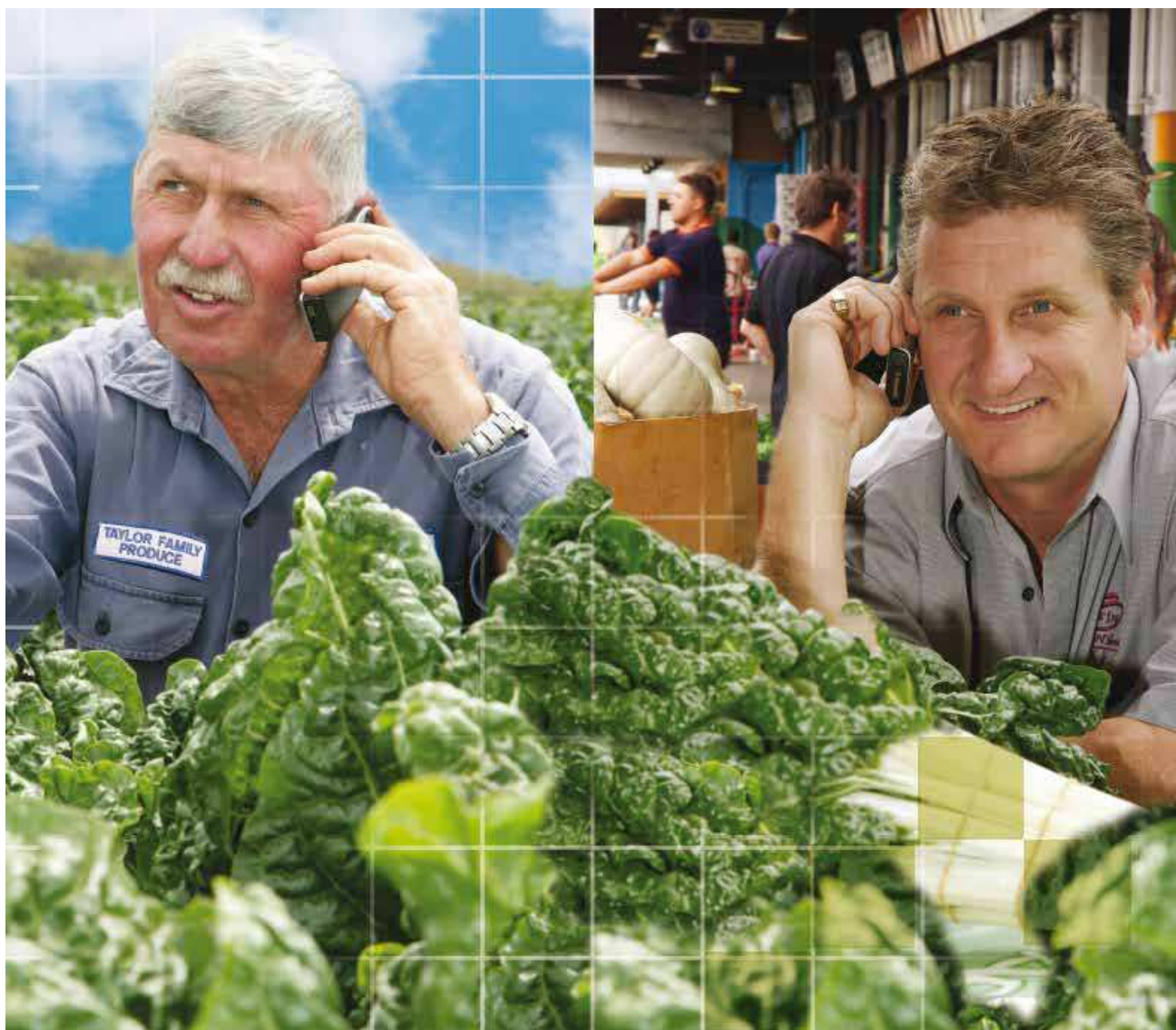
Ph: 02 6041 6641, Mobile: 0419 305 901,

Fax: 02 6021 0011

Email: [ceo@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:ceo@summerfruit.com.au)

Website: [www.summerfruit.com.au](http://www.summerfruit.com.au)





## Teamwork in action

There's no better example of teamwork in action than the Brisbane Produce Market. Growers, wholesalers and retailers build partnerships to ensure consumers receive the freshest fruit and vegetables. For a Grower's Kit to help you work better with your wholesaler business partners, contact us by emailing [admin@brisbanemarkets.com.au](mailto:admin@brisbanemarkets.com.au), visit our website [www.brisbanemarkets.com.au](http://www.brisbanemarkets.com.au) or phone the **free Grower Hotline** on 1800 631 002.





## *From the LCA President – Raymond Hick*

### **Low Chill Australia & Summerfruit Australia Join Forces with Newsletter**



The year is flying by. We are preparing for winter pruning and it only seems like yesterday we were picking and packing. The wet weather has continued and spring will tell how much root rot we have sustained.

#### ***Investigating the possibility of extending the withholding period on Fenthion ...***

The first quarter of this year has been busy with meetings being arranged with Politicians, Government Departments, and anyone who will listen to us and try to understand that without a knock down chemical for the control of fruit fly, we don't have an industry. We are currently investigating the possibility of extending the withholding period on Fenthion and having another chemical registered that has a three day withholding period. Together they would give us good protection and hopefully we can have fruitful discussions with APVMA regarding this possible alternative to withdrawing Fenthion.

It seems if we have another issue to contend with and that is spray drift. If I didn't know better I would think that Government does not want a stonefruit industry and is trying to get rid of us one way or the other.

#### ***SAL & LCA working together on issues ...***

John Moore CEO of SAL and the Directors have been working together on this issue. It is a national one and it is nice to work together as an industry rather than two separate organizations.

It has been agreed that we must become one voice and, as a start, we are in future going to use the Newsletter to cover both the early/mid and late varieties. Articles will still be prepared on specific issues for each segment of the industry. It is hoped that we will all get a better understanding of the key issues thru this publication.

Ian McAlister President of Summerfruit has also prepared a report which will cover specific issues.

Hope everyone had a nice Easter.

*Ray Hick* – LCA President

*Low Chill Australia Inc.*





## Chair's Report ...



### ***Pretty average year ...***

In what many growers have described *a year from hell*, the 2010/2011 season has finally come to an end – locusts, five or six times the annual rainfall – in two weeks in some areas; floods; extremely high humidity; lack of temperature; - all combined for a pretty average year.

### ***Levies will be way down ...***

The early fruit from all areas was very low in sugar content and unfortunately consumer confidence was shattered and although at times fruit was scarce, prices didn't reflect the situation. The final figures are still to come in but production and therefore levies will be way down on previous years. The IAC at its March meeting had no alternative but to suspend the marketing budget for 2012 and had a very limited budget to allocate to some of the excellent projects put forward by the research community. I am sure the IAC and the SAL board are both frustrated with the situation we are in and it's very difficult to stay positive.

### ***The levy debate ...***

The levy debate has been going on for over a decade in the stone fruit industry and where other industries have moved with the times and increased their levy, politics has seen our industry become stagnant to the extent that it's almost impossible for the board to function.

Two or three years ago we conducted a workshop in Melbourne with the major players within industry. The net result was they wanted a business plan of what we thought could be achieved with a levy increase. A plan was commissioned and a levy road show was to commence but, once again, politics reared its ugly head and the process was cancelled. Also, some of the board including myself were not confident with the rose coloured picture that the consultant had come up with. My own thoughts were that I wasn't prepared to run around the country promising outcomes that couldn't be delivered.

At our last board meeting we decided to change direction and instead of looking into the proverbial *crystal ball* we decided to ***highlight what we can't do for industry without the necessary finance.***

### **ESSENTIAL R&D**

1. **Quickly find an alternative for Dimethoate & Fention** (needs to be an across Industry action - \$2 million minimal);
2. **Retention of existing Pest Free Areas.** Need to re-define what an outbreak is/need new ICA's for fruit movement within regions;
3. **The Murray Darling Basin issue.** Security of water;
4. **Support package for flood affected orchards.** (Loss of production 5 years) The precedent has been set in Queensland (640K over 2 years, no interest and bananas back in production in 5 to 6 months);
5. **Climate change/brown rot** (increasing problem- cost of alternatives?? TBA);
6. **Consumer preference research** (106K on hold);
7. **Crop forecasting** (29K on hold);
8. **Maintenance of executive employee and SAL partnership agreement, communication to levy payers** (280K); and
9. **Retention of existing essential chemicals and the registration of new cost efficient chemicals.**





## ESSENTIAL MARKETING

One positive aspect of the business plan was the need for one to two million (still a low percentage of GDP compared with competing industries) dollars to be spent on an advertising campaign. Already with a very low budget we are two years into a very successful domestic campaign with “Con the fruiterer” that has attracted a lot of media attention. What is needed is the security of his profile rather than persist with just in store promotions.

The major problem that we as an industry face is the consumer dissatisfaction with our product. Yes, it was very difficult this year because of the un-seasonal conditions that we all had to contend with but the simple fact is, whether we like it or not, the limited consumer research conducted so far all comes back with the same message – that *consumers across the country are not confident with the current product*.

If, as a collective industry, we can't rectify this perception then the possibility of growing our category further and providing a better bottom line for all, is impossible. **Without the necessary funding the board is powerless.**



*Ian McAlistér* – SAL Chair

## *Market News ...*

### *Brisbane Markets development continues*

Refurbishment of the three-story Fresh Centre building at Brisbane Markets is on track for a midyear completion after only minor delays caused by the January 2011 flood.

*Pictured - 4,700m<sup>2</sup> northern warehouse*



Contractors Wiley & Co are making firm progress on the refurbishment of the former Growcom building, now referred to as The Fresh Centre. There are obvious changes to the outside of the building as the work progresses.



The wholesaler service organisation, Brismark, will be located with Brisbane Markets Limited with up to an additional 2000m<sup>2</sup> of lettable space within the building.

The top level of the building will also house a history collection room. Level one is dedicated to office space while the ground level will incorporate offices, a retail café, two training rooms, a demonstration kitchen, a Market service centre and a provision for serviced offices.

The work is stage one of a new commercial hub for Brisbane Markets and has anticipated completion date of this building is August 2011.

Stage two of the new commercial hub will progress the development of a new interface between the Fresh Centre and Commercial Centre which will allow public access from Sherwood Road to new landscaped parking areas and walkways.

In addition, work also continues on the 4,700m<sup>2</sup> northern warehouse (pictured), adjacent the IGA Distribution facility, with the installation of the steel frames finalised before the flood event and the construction of the panel walls progressed. The anticipated completion date of this building is August 2011.

## Weather won't affect fruit & vegetable eating message

**While wild weather events brought challenging times to Queensland fruit and vegetable industry, it's even more important that the Brisbane Markets Kids Fresh Net (QKFN) Program's healthy eating message be served up to thousands of children.**

Brisbane Markets Marketing and Communications Manager Maree Peterson said it was relatively easy to put fresh fruit and vegetables on the table throughout most of the year. However, parents needed some helpful ideas from the kids when fresh produce carried blemishes, or when family favourites were difficult to source after the recent dramatic weather conditions.

Mrs Peterson said Brisbane Produce Markets QKFN team was helping all they could by continuing to present its popular *Apples ain't Apples* and *Crunch Time* school classroom presentations which are tailored to years 2-4 and 5-7 respectively.

"There has been excellent support for the program over the years and this has continued this year despite the wild weather that greeted the beginning of the school year. Term bookings are at capacity with over 2,000 students to be educated," said Mrs Peterson.

Both QKFN presentations are free and designed to improve healthy eating habits in children, parents, teachers and tuckshop convenors.

Brisbane Markets Limited (BML) launched the program in 2003 with the support of the wholesaler representative organization Brismark, in response to research which demonstrated that diet related health problems such as obesity, cancers, high cholesterol and diabetes were increasing in children.



**Photo:** Students from St Oliver Plunkett School (Cannon Hill) take part in an 'Apples Ain't Apples' presentation.





## *From the Summerfruit CEO ...*



### *For the times they are a-changin'*

**John Moore – CEO Summerfruit Australia Ltd.**

#### *National Newsletter to encompass all stonefruit producers ...*

The Summerfruit Australia Board (SAL) has taken a decision to commence from May 2011 a national newsletter that will encompass all stonefruit producers. Total ownership. This newsletter will be distributed to key regional leaders for forwarding to their networks. From now, editorials from Low Chill and High Chill Chairs will be a feature of this combined newsletter and include my usual roundups and relevant news and feature interesting articles from researchers and industry in general.

Levy payers will need to register with Summerfruit Australia Limited via the web site to receive this newsletter **if you do not** receive emails from me as part of the current member service. Obviously if you are a low chill member your existing network will deliver this new format. Simply visit the home page, [www.summerfruit.com.au](http://www.summerfruit.com.au) > become a member > register now, then your details will be recorded and you will receive the next newsletters.

#### *Chemical Issues ...*

There has been a lot of emphasis on chemicals lately and a significant forum was attended by Industry representatives from Queensland, West Australia, NSW and myself. Phillip Wilk has put a good summary together and is included in this edition. I must stress these 'envelope' calculations are still to be confirmed and we need to wait for the official report to be released and I do not want to raise false hopes in any way.

Another review is currently underway and in typical bureaucratic fashion, the industry consultative period has been short. This is a national scheme for assessment, registration and control of use, agricultural and veterinary chemicals. SAL and many other industries expressed concerns at the user pays model proposed. At a combined industry meeting with the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Senator Joe Ludwig on 14<sup>th</sup> April this was raised. Thankfully he did offer that he would consider a period of extension for consultation in the process prior to any final decision. Once the draft report is released the SAL Board will be able to comment.

#### *Spray Drift Review ...*

Another hot topic this month was the crucial workshop to debate on 19<sup>th</sup> April – the spray drift review. A recommendation by the APVMA is that a 300 metre buffer zone be set for future agricultural/horticultural best practise. There has been a working committee set up to see how industries can work with this proposal. A Queensland university study came up with this suggestion of a downwind 300 metre zone through wind tunnel testing. I will keep you informed with more details in later newsletter's as more development work is formulated to minimise impact on your orchards. All tree cropping industries are contesting the validity and implications of this APVMA proposal.

#### *Fruit Bat Controls and Regulations ...*

An increasing number of producing regions are tackling authorities about fruit bat controls and regulations imposed, which prevent effective outcomes for affected producers. This is becoming another major headache and will be survival headlines in the future. It has been reported in media that a class action has commenced in Queensland to overturn legislation. It is an anomaly or even ludicrous that we can cull and eat our national emblem and here we are protecting bats that decimate peoples livelihoods and impact on the environment.



### Plum Verification Trials ...

The plum verification trials for efficacy of cold disinfestations of QFF have been completed and it is now up to BAPHIQ to approve the trial's success. The Taiwan inspector was satisfied with the project performance. Certainly from industries view point the trial was a success and I see no reason for any rejection. It would be fantastic if we have access for plums this next season to Taiwan.

### Summerfruit Export Results ...

The Summerfruit export results to end February have taken a sharp turn downwards with February results 51% below last year and pulled overall results back 24% for the season to date.

Summerfruit exports were 5,882 MT to February 2011, 24% below this time last year

There were 8,235 MT shipped in last 12 months.

Value to February \$17.99m is 16% below last year.

Hong Kong was the main market affected the result - down 65% on last February sales

Middle East and Singapore similar to LY.

Taiwan had NO shipments in February after the launch program.

UK volumes lift later in the season with a March program for Plums.

By end February Nectarines were lower by around 39%.

Plums dipped 10% - with Victoria down 35% offset by strong 24% growth from WA.

Overall Victoria, the leading export state, dipped 35% whilst WA has increased 31% this season – mostly plums

The overall value per kg is .29c (10.4%) higher at \$3.06 and coupled with 10% higher exchange rate customers in Asia with currencies that move in similar direction to USD were paying more than 20% higher for Australian fruit this season.

New Australia Fresh POSM has been prepared for use in export markets and supported promotions in Taiwan and Thailand although overall results were disappointing.

Summerfruit Export Update - February 2011				
Product	July to Feb-11	Change to 09/10	Volume 12 months	Share 12 months
Hong Kong -	2,939,151	-35%	3,414,510	41%
-MIDDLE EAST 15- -	1,307,702	-6%	1,858,124	23%
Singapore -	756,069	-15%	1,126,605	14%
-EU 27- -	47,443	-37%	786,631	10%
Malaysia -	275,325	-22%	311,077	4%
Thailand -	81,290	-57%	179,945	2%
Taiwan -	242,289	1015%	242,289	3%
Russia -	32,544	12%	43,292	1%
-PACIFIC ISLANDS- -	54,508	-42%	74,334	1%
all other	145,696		60,768	2%
<b>total Summerfruit</b>	<b>5,882,017</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>8,235,803</b>	<b>100%</b>
source : ABS data, HAL analysis				

Please contact John Moore for any further assistance:

Ph: 0419 305 901;

Email: [ceo@summerfruit.com.au](mailto:ceo@summerfruit.com.au)

8/452 Swift St., Albury NSW 2640





For your Sales and Marketing needs this coming season look to a single point, whole of crop sales team you can trust.



## Who is Galaxy Farms?

We are Galaxy Farms... a 100% Australian owned and operated wholesale fruit marketing and distribution company. Whether it is Retail, Wholesale or Export Galaxy Farms has outlets for your entire crop.

We are fresh produce marketing specialists and our whole team brings with them expertise and a wealth of knowledge and experience. Galaxy Farms is one of the largest Stone Fruit providers in Australia with a team dedicated to the Low Chill Stone Fruit season.

As a Sales and Marketing team we manage the critical path for your entire product distribution, from product development and orchard management through to marketing, national supply chain relationships and distribution.

We market, sell and distribute premium quality fruits, providing the best produce for our customers and a valuable service for our growers. Stonefruit is our specialty, though with our significant growth in the past few years we also manage growers of mangoes, citrus, apples, pears and avocados.



We deliver our growers the most simple and effective process from farm to consumer.



We focus on the sale and distribution of your crop, so you can focus on what you do best – growing!



We deliver the highest quality fresh produce to our retailers and wholesalers... you can trust in every order we fill!

[www.galaxyfarms.com.au](http://www.galaxyfarms.com.au)

Phone (03) 9540 3310

[admin@galaxyfarms.com.au](mailto:admin@galaxyfarms.com.au)





## Research ...

### ***Regional Evaluation Project -***

A number of low chill stone fruit growers from the NSW Northern Rivers and Queensland attended an information day at Ray Hick's Hidden Valley Orchard at Bangalow put on by **Graham Fleming** from *Graham's Factree* to explain a new stone fruit evaluation project.



*Graham Fleming*

The regional evaluation project is a Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL) assisted Project aimed at assessing varieties originally from the USA Zeiger program. These new varieties are being imported under quarantine and are being supplied by Graham Fleming for evaluation in a number of stone fruit growing regions throughout Australia.

The reason this method of evaluation is being used is that many individuals in the past that had trial trees on their properties did not make performance information available to other growers. It was also difficult to get proper feedback as growers were always busy during harvest time to give detailed written evaluations. The local regional association need to select a person to perform annual evaluations on the varieties under test and submit the written evaluations to Graham Fleming.

Plants imported will be planted out initially at a primary site in Renmark SA. If the variety looks promising it will be sent to a number of regional sites for evaluation.

Regional sites for varietal evaluations need to be partially funded by a local association or grower group. The sites also need to be secure and be managed commercially. There will be five regional evaluation sites throughout Australia.

The Regional evaluation project has budgeted ten trips per year for a nominated candidate from each region to visit the Zeiger breeding program in California so new potential varieties can be selected for importation and regional evaluation. Local regional associations will need to partially fund their trip expenses.



**Special thanks to Graham Fleming and Ray Hick for hosting the field day and BBQ.**

**Phillip Wilk**

NSW Department of Primary Industries

**CHECK OUT THE LOW CHILL WEBSITE – [www.lowchillaustralia.com.au](http://www.lowchillaustralia.com.au)**





## Industry News ...

### Local nursery achieves Queensland first in accreditation

Woombye-based Birdwood Nursery celebrated receiving its accreditation to the highly stringent BioSecure HACCP program in March, making it the first nursery in Queensland to be validated.

BioSecure HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) is the world-recognised standard in risk management processes designed to assist growers in assessing their current and future pest, disease and weed risks which is critical for the success of every nursery.



*Steve Hart (NGIA), Denis Roe and Rory Cullinan from Birdwood Nursery*

Rory Cullinan, General Manager of Birdwood Nursery, said the accreditation was the result of the nursery's long-standing commitment to being well equipped to identify and deal with any potential issues that it may face.

"In our industry we are constantly faced with new challenges as our products and the environment in which they grow are always evolving, thanks to Mother Nature. It is therefore essential that we have the right processes in place to help deliver on our commitment to providing customers with the cleanest tree possible," said Mr Cullinan.

"We are proud to be an industry leader in the Research and Development into early detection and prevention of soil borne diseases in fruit trees. At Birdwood we recently established a R&D company committed to continue testing rootstocks tolerant to soil borne diseases for the benefit of our clients and the industry at large."

In nursery production, biosecurity is essential for protection against the introduction of insects, diseases, weeds and other biological organisms that may adversely impact on the business and its products.

The BioSecure HACCP program provides growers with the decision-making tools to support on-farm biosecurity and guide them in identifying the risks and the steps they need to take to control them.

"Given the environment in which we operate, our ability to respond quickly and effectively to combat biosecurity issues is essential and our accreditation confirms how seriously we take these issues," said Mr Cullinan.

Birdwood Nursery specialises in providing wholesale fruit trees to commercial growers and retail customers across Australia and has been awarded the Best Large Production Nursery in Queensland for the past two years.

**Birdwood Nursery** was established in 1978 and specialises in fruit tree production supplying wholesale quantities of the highest quality fruit trees to commercial growers and retail nurseries throughout Australia.

They take pride in delivering on time, in full and exceeding quality expectations whilst maintaining their environmental responsibility. This is ensured through industry best practice nursery management combined with a desire to constantly seek new and improved varieties from breeding programmes both within Australia and throughout the world.

They are founding members of the Avocado Nursery Voluntary Accreditation Scheme (ANVAS), the Australian Nurserymen's Fruit Improvement Company (ANFIC) and accredited by the Nursery Industry Accreditation Scheme (NIASA) and the Australian Passion Fruit Industry (APFI).



## *Report ...*

# Dimethoate and Fenthion Label Use Workshop

Wednesday 13 April 2011, 9am to 5pm – Sebel - King George Square, Brisbane

Attended by **Mark Wilkinson** - *Representing Western Australian Fruitgrowers*

- The meeting was convened by the Federal Department of Agriculture as a response to grower lobbying on the review of the registration of Fenthion and Dimethoate. {Rogor and Lebaycid}
- Invitations to this meeting were issued to all peak industry producer bodies, State and Federal Agriculture departments and chemical companies. It was convened a day before the National Vegetable growers conference at the same venue.
- Notable absences were; Bayer {makers of Fenthion}; anyone from South Australia, Tasmania, Northern or Capital Territory, Apple and Pear, Melons, Citrus, Avocado Cherry, Passionfruit Grapes or Canning Fruit industries had no representation
- Stonefruit had three representatives, two growers and the Executive officer. Western Australia had two representatives
- A survey form on the use pattern of Dimethoate and Fenthion was submitted by five attendees before the meeting

**Rodney Turner** of Plant Health Australia chaired the meeting and outlined the background to the Governmental response to the review, mainly on the use of the chemicals to allow trade from infected into fly free areas

- Aiming for a seamless transition of trade within Australia from dipping fruit in chemical, to a systems approach
- \$360 M trade of edible peel product at risk
- Queensland planning most advanced
- Irradiation not a viable option to assure clean fruit.

**Robyn Schipp** of the Agricultural Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority {APVMA} then outlined the review process and the APVMA position

- Review started 1997
- Draft report **will** be issued in the next few months
- Safety and efficacy are the **only** criteria used by the APVMA
- Acute toxicity for Fenthion and Dimethoate of most concern. Not long term dietary intake, modifying label uses to reduce dietary intake will not be useful
- Data collected from trials funded by industry through Horticulture Australia Limited {HAL} were run over 2008 and 2009 and used to fill gaps in the residue data records for certain fruits and harvest delays.
- At the time of the issue of the Draft Report some label uses of Dimethoate and Fenthion **will be withdrawn instantly with no taper period.**

**Alan Norden**, APVMA Minor Use Project Officer then outlined how minor use permits could be used .

- Minor use covers new uses for already registered chemistry, but also may cover new chemistry if sufficient information is available.
- Residue in crop is top concern, crop safety and efficacy evidence less than for full registration
- About 500 applications/year, 5 to 8 month processing time,
- Currently have an application for Spinetoram {Delegate from Dow Chemicals} to be used on apples pears and stonefruit for fruit fly control.

There was some discussion of the use of sodium chloride, {stock salt}, as an adjuvant to chemicals used in control of sucking insect pests. A rate of 0.5% salt allows a 50 to 60 % reduction in label rates of Dimethoate when used to control aphids and other sucking insects. This leads to less damage to beneficials and lower residues. The legality of such a use and its wider application was discussed.





**Ben from Berry Exchange**, Costa farms, Grows 100 + Ha of blue and raspberry inland Northern New South Wales at Coorindi. The farm is isolated from other growing areas. The blueberries require cross-pollination by bees, but there is a two-month overlap between harvest and blossom between varieties, bee friendly control of QFly is used during the overlap with:

- Two people full time monitoring/control orchard and surrounds
- Monitoring traps on a 400 M grid
- Male annihilation baits at 20 M grid { 10000 baits }
- Intensive baiting 2 weekly Naturalure or Hymal and protein bait on crop and surrounds
- 2 in 5 dilution of bait with a 20 ml spot every 5 meters, air powered drench gun used, as mix is too thick to pump.

As soon as blossom is finished Dimethoate sprays are initiated as a cover at 28-day interval.

**Kevin Bodnaruk of AKC** consulting is acting for HAL as a chemical registration consultant. He gave his analysis of the situation:

- The Acute Reference Dose, for Dimethoate will be 0.02 mg/kg and for Fenthion will be 0.007mg/kg
- Dimethoate breaks down to Omethoate in the produce. For the purposes of assessment a multiplier of 7 is applied to Omethoate and is then added to the Dimethoate figure as a total residue,
- All post-harvest uses of Dimethoate and Fenthion on fruit with edible peel leads to higher than defensible residue, even at ½ or ¼ rates. Non edible peel should be no problem
- There is **no possibility** of any preharvest uses of Dimethoate for any edible skin fruit at any rate of use, or withholding period. **END OF STORY**
- There is **no possibility** of Fenthion being retained for any edible skin fruit for any application EXCEPT, maybe, stonefruit as a 14-day withholding. There is insufficient data to support a 14-day withholding and the residue for peach may still be too high. A two year minor use permit pending new data **may** be allowed, due to lobbying from Summerfruit Australia.

After the afternoon break the meeting reconvened to consider the options but there was little to be said and the meeting finished before 4.00 pm. There will be a meeting convened by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Canberra) at the Perth Zoo.

#### **Market Access Seminar**

**Tuesday 17 May 2011**

**9:00am to 1:30pm**

**Perth Zoo, 20 Labouchere Road, South Perth**

*This Seminar will include an update to the APVMA review.*

*Contact: Ryan Genero on 02 6272 3422 or Email: [ryan.genero@daff.gov.au](mailto:ryan.genero@daff.gov.au) before May 10.*

## ***Industry News ...***

# **Infostone: Push to collect 2011 industry data ...**

Growers have started entering their 2011 data into the **InfoStone** system; the stonefruit industry's new online data collection system. The **InfoStone** system allows data from growers to be collected and aggregated providing the ability to develop an industry-wide picture of plantings, yield and related harvest time.



### ***Information critical ...***

“Having better information about industry plantings and production is critical to support good decision making both at a business level and an industry level. We are asking all stonefruit growers to enter their data over the next month, so we can start to generate industry-wide information for growers,” commented **Vanessa Wight**, Summerfruit Industry Development Officer – Victoria.

### ***Data collected annually ...***

Data such as fruit type, number of trees planted, tree age and harvest time is collected in **InfoStone**. On an annual basis, growers are also asked to record an estimate of the volume of fruit they expect to produce and at the end of the season to provide updated information on actual yield. Collected data is then aggregated and only aggregated data is available - this ensures the confidentiality of individual growers' data.

### ***Industry-wide information invaluable ...***

“Experience from other horticulture industries tells us that industry-wide information is invaluable in planning both management and marketing activities. It is intended that the industry reports generated will assist growers in determining what varieties to grow, so they can maximise their income. Industry reports can also be used to support more effective marketing campaigns for the domestic and export markets,” Mrs Wight explained.

**All Australian stonefruit growers should have already received an email and letter outlining how you can enter your data into InfoStone.**

***For more information, or if you haven't received an email or letter please contact:***

Vanessa Wight, Summerfruit Industry Development Officer (Vic)

Phone: 0447 511 344

Email: ido@summerfruit.com.au

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## *Industry Information ...*

# **MELPAT BORDEUAX FUNGICIDE**

**“It sticks like...”**

**“You can get more vats out in a day”**

One of the more unpleasant and time consuming tasks for growers/orchardists is mixing (making) their own “Bordeaux”. This mixture of copper sulphate and lime has been the backbone of disease control in vines for centuries.

In more recent times, the number of crops relying on this product has increased despite its relatively old technology and active ingredients. It has remained one of **THE MOST RELIABLE** tools for disease control.

Copper-based products have an added benefit over other protectant fungicides in that they are active against bacteria. Bacterial (*Pseudomonas* & *Zanthomonas*) diseases have become a major disease in many fruit and vegetable growing areas. Control of these diseases start with winter application of copper. Bordeaux is registered in a wide range of crops including stone fruit, mangoes, vines, tomatoes, etc.

Orchardists and farmers these days are “time poor”. With the high cost of labour there are more and more demands on growers.

### ***Recently released - an “Easy-to-Use” Granular Formulation of Bordeaux ...***

Melpat has recently released an “Easy-to-Use” Granular Formulation of Bordeaux, which contains Tribasic Copper Sulphate and Lime (Calcium Carbonate). Growers can therefore get “more vats out in a day” now that this time consuming mixing operation is no longer necessary.

Being a co-formulated granule, there is no need to concern yourself with drums. No need to shake drums, just pour the granules into the spray vat whilst the agitator is running and filling.

The improved formulation of Bordeaux contains Tribasic Copper Sulphate as opposed to straight Copper Sulphate. Copper Sulphate is soluble in water, which has inherent problems with sticking on plant tissue surfaces.

We operate in a winter rainfall part of the country. It is therefore essential that sprays applied over the winter months “stick” and are not washed off the plant surfaces.

The addition of calcium hydroxide assists with the sticking (tenacity) properties and this can be seen by the blue covering of the trees after spraying.

**Melpat Bordeaux** contains Tribasic Copper Sulphate. Being insoluble in water, results in improved residual activity and this is important as winter sprays are less frequent than spring applied sprays and grower expectation is that the copper is expected to last even in wet, rainy conditions.

### ***Limited stocks available ...***

There are limited stocks of Melpat Bordeaux, so the suggestion is for you to register your interest with your local supplier.

**Make it easier on yourself – give it a go – stand back and see the difference.**





# A range of solutions for quality produce...



- Various copper formulations available – including **Bordeaux mixture**, **copper oxychloride**, **cupric hydroxide** and **copper sulphate**.
- **Wettable Granule / Dry Flowable formulations**
- **Cost effective and highly effective** fungal and bacterial disease control over an extensive range of fruit, vegetable and nut crops.



- **No Nozzle Blockages** (when used as per the Directions for Use table) – due to excellent suspension characteristics and particle sizing.
- **Very small particle size:** leading to better coverage on the plant surface.
- **Reduced rates:** optimizing disease control with reduced rates of copper in the soil.



- **Minimal Heavy Metal Impurities & dioxins:** well below the standards set by both the EU & the World Health Organisation.
- **Time saving & easy mixing**
- **OH & S Friendly:** pack sizes are below the recommended 18kg maximum weight.

## Other Products from the Melpat Range:



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## *Industry Information ...*



**Ectol** provides systemic stress resistance by increasing the levels of organic biochemicals, sugars and minerals within the plant tissue.

**Ectol** contains a number of unique ingredients designed to reduce young plant tissue's susceptibility to frost, cold, heat and drought: These ingredients include:

- Extracts of Kelp, soluble organic sugars and plant growth regulators
- Potassium known to influence cell turgidity and electrolytic balance.
- Trace elements essential for many enzymatic systems of cell wall structures.
- Amino acids as building blocks for protection and growth.

For frost control **Ectol** should be applied at "green tip" or whenever the plant or crop is considered frost sensitive and should be re-applied every 10 days while the risk period for frost prevails. **Ectol** will not burn leaves or buds if used according to specification.

The rate of application is 5 to 7.5L/hectare of **Ectol**, which is mixed with sufficient water to ensure crop coverage. **Ectol** can be mixed with most fungicides, but a "jar" test is recommended.

**Ectol** is a proven plant nutrient and will greatly benefit the plant as well as generating an additional 2 to 3 degrees extra frost tolerance.

### Enquiries:

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## *Industry Report ...*

# ***Dimethoate and Fenthion label use Workshop Summary***

Wednesday 13th April 2011, Brisbane.

Chaired by Rodney Turner chair of the Domestic Quarantine and market access Working Group (DQMAWG)

### ***Background ...***

This meeting was called to get industry response to changes in use of *Dimethoate* and *Fenthion* for the control of Queensland fruit fly and other insect pests for interstate trade. The meeting was to also review other insect pest controlled with *Fenthion* or *Dimethoate* on produce and how these commodities will be impacted by the review.

The loss of one or both of these chemicals will impact heavily on the Queensland fruit and vegetable industries to the value of \$360M. It will also impact on a number of other industries in NSW and Victoria that export fruit overseas or send fruit interstate.

### ***National response Plan ...***

A national response plan to these proposed changes has been in progress for the last 12-18 months and a *Dimethoate* and *Fenthion* response working group meets once per month to discuss these proposed changes in relation to interstate movement of fresh produce.

The national response plan is looking at measures for QFF risk management. These management options include whole systems approaches which may include trapping, spraying, fumigation, cold treatments and irradiation.

Irradiation will not at present be a viable alternative. The plant in Brisbane needs to be substantially upgraded with a major reinvestment if it was to cope with the quantities of produce. The cost of moving product from NSW or parts of Qld would be too expensive to be viable for most industries although it would guarantee that no insects are alive or viable at the final destination.

### ***APVMA ...***

**Robin Schipp** from the APVMA explained that they were only looking at the safety aspect of the review and not market access issues. Even though the product MRLs may be acceptable for the product and commodity it still may not satisfy interstate biosecurity requirements (Probit 9). This means that under the interstate protocol 99.9% of larvae or eggs within the product will be dead.

Someone asked about relaxing Probit 9 to 6 or 7 for interstate market access making it a little easier for growers using systems approaches that are more risky. It was explained that this could be done but imported fruit under the WTO would also be able to use this lower standard giving countries easier access to our markets with less stringent controls.

Residues are set for *Dimethoate* in produce based on Food and Safety Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) data for acceptable dietary intake (ADI). This is the quantity of a certain product consumed by a child in one sitting e.g. number of blueberries, peaches or nectarines that can be eaten in one sitting. This is the intake for long term consumption or exposure. Products that have an edible peel are at higher risk than those with removable peel such as oranges or mangoes.

APVMA also look at the acute reference dose (ARfD) for residues. This is the exposure to the product over a 24 hour period through handling or consuming a number of mixed fruits and vegetables in one day.

### ***Industry Response to Chemical Review ...***

This is a Horticulture Australia limited (HAL) across industry funded project led by **Kevin Bodnurak**. It looked at the gaps in knowledge in relation to *Fenthion* and *Dimethoate* and generated enough information to make some recommendations to APVMA.





Kevin explained that these were only ‘back of the envelope calculations’ and that these would need **to go to APVMA for final recommendations**.

It was explained that *Dimethoate* breaks down to a more toxic product *Omethoate*.

All original trials were done only on *Dimethoate* levels. When residues from treated fruit were sampled and MRLs established *Dimethoate* and *Omethoate* residues were added together to give a total and then a safety margin of seven times was calculated to give a final MRL. *Omethoate* in some products builds up to greater levels in some fruit and diminishes in others.

**There are 3 options possible after the review.**

1. Use pattern stays the same
2. Dietary intake is undetermined and so a slow phase out may occur
3. Dietary Intake is greater than ADI and an immediate withdrawal will occur over weeks and months with notification that the label use will be suspended.

**Preliminary findings and some recommendations were:**

- Edible peel fruit or vegetables that are post-harvest dipped in *Dimethoate* cannot be sustained and this treatment will be removed.
- For inedible peel fruit dipping may be acceptable as dietary intake is done on the edible section and not the peel.
- **Blueberries** will have a possible 3 day WHP after *Dimethoate* cover spray
- Raspberries looks unlikely at this stage with *Dimethoate*
- Tomatoes will have a 21 day pre harvest WHP for *Dimethoate*
- Capsicums will have a 3 day WHP with *Dimethoate*
- Eggplant 3 day WHP
- Cucumbers and Zucchini 3 day WHP
- Legumes are OK no changes
- **Stone fruit**
  - Nectarines will have a 14 day WHP with *Fenthion* but peaches may need 21 day WHP.
  - Plums 14 day WHP with *Fenthion*
  - Cherries 14 day WHP with *Fenthion*

Preharvest use will be the only method of treatment of produce with *Dimethoate*. No post-harvest use on edible peel fruit and vegetables.

**There were two presentations on systems approaches that are currently being assessed.**

**Ben Gudex**, Horticulturist from **Berryexchange**, presented a systems approach to managing fruit fly in blueberries on the Corindi farm near Coffs Harbour.

The reasons for a systems approach use by the Berryexchange was so that bees used for pollination are protected from *Dimethoate* whilst also providing QFF control during the long pollination window. Additionally, export product going to the UK market requires nil residues of *Dimethoate*. The Berryexchange use monitoring traps, perimeter baiting, male annihilation pads, bait spraying with *Naturalure* and *Hy-mal* (Maldison). For those markets that accept *Dimethoate* treatments under ICA 31 *Dimethoate* is used on blocks on a 21 day rotation.

The Corindi farm is in a more isolated area away from high density residential areas and hence implementing area wide management is made slightly easier where as in other blueberry growing regions it may be much more difficult to effectively implement.

**However, at this stage area wide management is not 100% effective at controlling QFF.**

## **Summary and conclusions**

For Blueberries, preliminary work seems to suggest that a 3 day WHP after treating fruit with *Dimethoate* will result in acceptable low residue levels in fruit.



Peaches and nectarines may have acceptable residue levels of *Fenthion* up to 14 days pre harvest. That may mean that if the existing label is suspended and treatments up to 14 days before harvest are accepted, a new interim permit will be issued notifying growers of 14 day pre harvest WHP but further data will need to be collected to allow the same treatment of peaches. At present, residue levels are acceptable at 3 weeks pre harvest but too high at 2 weeks. Growers will need to manage this 2 week period with other systems. Products such as *Delegate* (*Spinetoram*) may be acceptable for interstate trade plus trapping and spot spraying.

**Please Note: These are only preliminary recommendations and they need to go to the APVMA for acceptance and final comment.**



**Report prepared by –**  
**Phillip Wilk**  
NSW Department of Primary Industries

## *Overseas News ...*

### **Tough times for California stonefruit**

***Following a decade of mostly unprofitable markets, the US state's stonefruit industry faces a very uncertain future.***

*By Jeff Long - 3 May 2011*

The California Tree Fruit Agreement (CTFA) is on the ropes following years of poor returns for growers in the state.

Many stonefruit growers in California last year failed to turnover a profit after an unusually cool and wet spring saddled them with an abundance of small-sized fruit – particularly peaches – which proved difficult to sell.

The problem was further complicated by the fact that the US southeast produced a bumper peach crop, making for some very sloppy domestic markets during the early months of the deal.

Below-normal temperatures persisted throughout the summer of 2010 in California's Central Valley, which delayed harvesting and ultimately caused a major varietal overlap during the last weeks of the season, which further depressed returns.

One indication of just how dire the circumstances have become over recent years for the industry is that the CTFA – the 78-year-old umbrella

organization charged with administering several state and federal stonefruit marketing orders – is on the verge of dissolution.

The first indication of the extent of grower discontent came last October when the state peach and nectarine marketing orders failed to be renewed in an industry referendum.

With another referendum looming in January – this time for the federal marketing order governing peaches and nectarines – CTFA went into cost-cutting mode late last year, releasing a significant portion of its staff and reducing grower assessments for the federal program by nearly 50 per cent.

When the results of the balloting were announced last March, although more than 60 per cent of the industry voted to continue the two marketing orders, it was less than the required two-thirds super majority required by the USDA.

In late March, the USDA announced that it was terminating both programs, leaving just a single



marketing order – the California Plum Marketing Board – standing. In effect, the industry had voted the CTFA out of existence.

Left twisting in the winds of industry discontent is the fate of US\$2.5m in USDA Market Access Programme (MAP) funds.

“We have US\$500,000 in MAP funding to promote plums in Canada, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mexico this year,” said CTFA president Gary Van Sickle.

“The funds will be administered by the CTFA and the state board has been given the go-ahead by the USDA to develop programmes in those countries with the emphasis to be on trade support such as

merchandising training. There will be very little – if any – [media] promotions, however.”

Mr Van Sickle is concerned about the impact the CTFA’s pending dissolution will have on future MAP funding for peaches and nectarines.

“The problem is that peaches and nectarines are likely to get lost in the shuffle [of the CTFA closure] as only plums have been given a specific license for [overseas] promotion,” he said.

“If we don’t utilize our current MAP funding for peaches and nectarines, the industry will likely be allocated less [money from the USDA] in the future. It’s basically a use it or lose it situation.”

*Article reproduced for the interest of growers and industry.*

## ***Phillip Wilk Seasonal Update ...***

# **Orchard Management April to June ...**

The period from April to June is a critical time in the season for a deciduous stone fruit orchard as it will determine the quality and quantity of fruit production in the coming season. Trees will begin to shutdown and go into dormancy due to shortening day length and decreasing night time temperatures. At this stage trees accumulate nutrients under their bark to support flowering after chill requirements are met. Once trees have accumulated sufficient chill during dormancy, a synchronised budbreak will occur once the soil begins to warm and heat units have accumulated.

## ***2011 Season ...***

The weather on NSW north coast and southern QLD from January to April 2011 has been wet again but close to normal for this time of the year. Humid wet conditions must be considered by growers when maintaining both stone fruit tree health and soil nutrition for the coming season. Growers need to be vigilant and apply rust preventative sprays to avoid early leaf fall. Early leaf fall may result in a false dormancy and early flowering resulting in a poor fruit set.

It has been evident in the district that many stone fruit trees are suffering this season due to Phytophthora root rot from being inundated for prolonged periods. This will probably only begin to show up in spring when trees are under pressure to produce both fruit and foliage. Treating trees now when the tree is about to shut down makes growers feel good but will not control the disease.

Most Phosphorus acid products are drawn to the greatest sink in plants. In the case of too much soil water, we need to get the product into the roots. Late winter and early spring (July – August) is the time when root flush in stone fruit trees occurs on NSW north coast and Qld and when products, if applied, will be most effective.

White peach scale is also widespread this year. Growers will need to thoroughly treat the butts of the trees in cracks and under bark with oil sprays mixed with registered chemicals during dormancy.





### ***Fertiliser Application ...***

Growers need to consider recent rainfall over the last few months in this region which may have resulted in some nutrient leaching of calcium and potassium from soils. How little or how much is lost can really only be determined by soil and leaf tests. Without these tools, approximations to the degree of nutrient loss can only be made.

New fertiliser rates and timing for Australian low chill orchards Nutrient	Fertiliser rate (kg/Ha)*	Fertiliser rate (kg/Ha)*	Fertiliser rate (kg/Ha)*	Total rate /year
<b>Budbreak (late winter)</b>	<b>Post-Harvest (Summer)</b>		<b>Autumn</b>	
<b>Nitrogen</b>	66	22	22	110
<b>Phosphorus</b>	9	3	3	15
<b>Potassium</b>	66	22	22	110
<b>Calcium</b>	150		150	
<b>Magnesium</b>	42	14	14	70

**Accidental early flowering is something to be avoided.** It usually results in a prolonged flowering and poor quality fruit. It is usually a result of poor management. It is important to keep trees in good health during late summer and autumn.

Early flowering may occur for the following reasons:

- Stress in late summer from poor nutrition (mainly low Nitrogen), lack of water or heavy pruning may cause trees to go dormant early. The warm conditions then induce trees into an early flowering;**
- Early defoliation in autumn from rust or mites exposes the new buds and forces and induced early flowering; and**
- Heavy rains in May sometimes induces early flowering.**

### ***Defoliation ...***

Stone fruit trees are now beginning to shut down for winter dormancy. In warmer areas such as the Alstonville plateau, many trees are still growing strongly with full leaf cover. In these warmer areas where chill accumulates late in the season, it will be necessary to defoliate trees once a certain calendar date has been reached if leaves do not fall naturally. This will normally be around mid-May. This is done to induce dormancy or a break in the tree's growth cycle. This will allow approximately a four to six week interval between leaf loss and budbreak.

The chemicals normally used for defoliation are either copper oxychloride, or 5% zinc sulphate or 5% potassium nitrate. Potassium nitrate (5%) as a foliar spray is used up to three times at this stage which allows preconditioning of buds resulting in a lower chill requirement which may advance flowering and fruit set from 10-21 days.

It is important that one or two sprays at this dormant stage should be copper with a petroleum oil spray (PSO) as an additive and a lime sulphur spray. This will not only control many of the fungal diseases (canker, gummosis) but will also control peach leaf curl on leaves before budbreak.

**Copper will cause complete defoliation if sprayed on low chill stone fruit trees at any other time of the year.**

### ***Pruning ...***

Pruning is carried out once trees are in dormancy and defoliated. Pruning is the first stage of removing excess wood and fruit buds. The earliest fruiting varieties are first to be pruned with varieties that require higher chill being pruned later.

### ***Insect monitoring and control ...***

White peach scale and San Jose scale are both easily seen at this time of the year. They are usually seen around rough cracked bark. White peach scale has been seen on many orchards this season. This pest is becoming > P. 25



increasingly difficult to control in north coast's orchards. It may be due to chemical resistance or due to exclusion netting modifying the climate or stopping other predators from keeping them in check. Thorough spray coverage with a handgun or backpack is necessary for proper control of these insects when they are in the crawler stage.

### ***Controlling tree size ...***

Most growers routinely use Paclobutrazol (Austar®, Payback®) to control excessive vegetative growth. Half the total annual dose can be applied to trees after shoot growth begins in June. This allows growers to assess the health of individual trees before they apply the chemical. Many varieties are not excessively vigorous and may not need to be treated such as *Sunblaze*. Most trees respond well to an annual rate of 4ml/tree. This is split into two applications of 2ml each applied in June and December. If the trees already show signs of the chemical uptake in the leaves and laterals, then hold off applying the next half dose. It is important to remember that plant hormones may kill trees if a heavy handed approach is used. Remember to irrigate well before and after applying Paclobutrazol to ensure a good uptake.

**Phillip Wilk**

**NSW Department of Primary Industries**

## ***Australian Stonefruit Grower - 2011 Publication Timetable -***

Contributions are invited for the next scheduled publication - **AUGUST 2011.**

<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>APRIL</b>	<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>
<i>Advertising Deadline</i> <b>7 February</b>	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> <b>14 April</b>	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> <b>31 July</b>	<i>Advertising Deadline</i> <b>31 October</b>
<i>Copy Deadline</i> <b>10 February</b>	<i>Copy Deadline</i> <b>21 April</b>	<i>Copy Deadline</i> <b>7 August</b>	<i>Copy Deadline</i> <b>7 November</b>

*Note: Publication Dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Publishers.*

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### **CONTACT –**

**Col Scotney** – National Producer/Editor

***Australian Stonefruit Grower***

*Communications Manager*

**Low Chill Australia Inc.**

PO Box 772, Hervey Bay QLD 4655

Phone: (07) 4128 0585 – Mobile: 0407 589 445 – Email: [cm@lowchillaustralia.com.au](mailto:cm@lowchillaustralia.com.au)