

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

There has been considerable attention centred on the orchard set up over the winter for the coming season. Each year there seems to be additional political matters to consider which is often difficult for some growers as all they really want to do is to get on and just grow the "stuff" and hopefully allow some free time "to do the things you want to do" for leisure time. Contractors often do not follow instructions and it is pleasing to hear that there are a number that have been called back to sort out particular issues before payment. You must have a supervisor in place to hit those cane and bud targets not just with any wood type but the type that you want. I can hear the voices from the hills saying that we had to use what we had - so why not this year think about that now and plan through the summer to retain the cane that you want for next year.

There has been a reasonable bud burst (50% to 60%) however there is variability not just between vines but over orchards and regions. Let's hope that we can get over this frost period without damage. Reports are telling us that we are in for a drier spring and summer so attention to detail will be required to get crop loading at the correct level for optimum productivity.

The dry matter debate continues with the recent submission papers being returned for the review committee to make practical recommendations to the Industry Advisory Council to consider. Once the IAC have discussed, a final recommendation will go to the December board meeting so we should all know by Christmas if there are any changes to the sampling methodology, the taste indicator (TZI), the taste grade (TZG), the supply taste payment (STP), and the maximum taste payment (MTP). A pity that the cost of this process has only resulted in approximately 140 submissions, however I guess that a number of them have been put in by facilities on behalf of Growers. On a positive note, as Lesley McKenzie is on the review committee she has

noticed a strong representation from Aerocool growers, so a big thank you to those that did take the effort to put in a submission.

TECHNICAL UPDATE

The recent Hort Research / Zespri Pollination Seminar was worthwhile and covered

- Best practice pollination management by Mark Goodwin
- Varroa update by Michelle Taylor
- Artificial Pollination by Mark Goodwin
- Bee Safety by Neale Cameron

We have a copy of the Pollination Seminar handout which includes a copy of a contract so if you would like a copy please contact either Hugh or Dave.

SPRING FIELD DAY

We have just completed our Spring Field Day which was very well attended with some active questioning of speakers. A very big thank you to our hosts Petrina and Lance Martelli, and Sue and Terry Fowler, also for clearing out there sheds (Sue what great scones). Thank you also to Steve, Roger and Andrew from GroPlus, Richard Bawden from Fruit Fed Supplies and Philip Barlow from Bio-Soils and Crop Ltd. We handed out the KiwiTech Bulletin No 32 on Principles of Growing Fruit with Superior Dry Matter which is dated September 2004 so if you would like a copy we can send it to you. Contact Hugh or Dave.

The key messages were:

1. On Pollination – a copy of material is available

2. **On Crop Protection** – consider the new systemic options of Actara and Calypso as they are very effective and safer for bees. Don't leave until the last minute to apply. If spraying the shelter the greater % of the tree needs to be hit not just the bottom area the systemic option would work well here.

3. **On Fertiliser and Sustainable Farming** – the importance of side dressings was discussed with particular reference to Nitrogen and Potassium usage. Philip spoke on his principals on using Muriate of Potash in the base dressings and Sulphate of Potash in the side dressings. Foliar fertilisers are important, particularly from now to flowering and two sprays with good levels of trace elements iron and manganese are recommended. Minimising weed spray strips to a minimal width is also recommended as herbicides tend to have a negative impact on soil microbial activity.

4. **On Canopy Management** – Key Principles

• **Winter Pruning**

Bud numbers
Cane spacing
Selection of wood type

• **Canopy Establishment**

To establish a healthy, stable, efficient "solar panel" to grow a frame work for next years fruit.

• **Canopy Management**

Control the growth to minimise competitive sinks.

• **Crop Loading**

Decide on the optimum number of flowers needed for the planned crop load.

• **Pollination**

Pollination increases the ability of fruit to compete for carbohydrates, with fresh and dry weight increasing with seed number.

On Electronic Spray Diary – If you are interested this opportunity has been arranged for existing and proposed Aerocool growers. Hugh and Dave will be there.

Date : Monday 16th October

Time : 3.00pm

Place : Zespri Office.

Please phone Pat at our Mount office on 5725300 to confirm attendance for catering

AEROCOOL HENS AND CHICKS DAY OUT

This years Tauranga Garden & Artfest is being held from 6th to 12th November. If any ladies would like to be part of this enjoyable day, please phone Pat at our Mount office on 5727300 to book your seat on the Aerocool hosted bus, lunch provided

Date: Friday November 10th

Meet at Aerocool Mount site 67 Aerodrome Road at 8.15am

Bus departs at 8.30am Bus returns at 5.30pm

BUD COUNTS

In conjunction with Gro-Plus, Aerocool will be commencing bud counts on all orchards starting this week. The aim of this is to provide growers with a detailed estimate of potential fruit numbers on their orchards, to be used as a management tool by growers themselves or in conjunction with their orchard manager.

Based on these counts, the orchards location and production history, a recommendation in regard to crop loading, thinning strategies and pollination requirements will be made to growers.

PACKING AND COOLSTORAGE

2006 has certainly proved to be a difficult year for storing kiwifruit. The industry and Aerocool have experienced a level of repacking and fruitloss not seen in well over a decade. The level of losses and the additional resources required to repack fruit has placed significant strain on the industries ability to meet shipping orders when required.

The majority of ships to Europe have experienced either delays in port awaiting sufficient fruit to

payment news

load, or have sailed short of fruit in order to meet Panama booking slots or to ensure sufficient fruit arrives to market without creating a shortage of supply to customers.

Aerocool has been running extended working hours, six days a week for over three months now in order to meet our shipping requirements which we have done for the majority of our orders.

The last Europe ship has now departed. Remaining are two Japanese vessels and container product mainly to our Asian markets which will ease pressure on the two packhouse sites as volumes required per week reduce following the sailing of the last ship to Europe.

While losses to repacking have climbed Aerocool's fruitloss has continued to remain at or just below that of the industry average for the year. Our performance to the 1st October against the industry is provided in the table below.

	Aerocool GREEN	Zespri GREEN	Aerocool GOLD	Zespri GOLD
% Shipped	82.1	82.7	100	97
% Fruitloss over submit trays	6.50	6.75	7.3	9.6

INTERCHECK RESULTS

Intercheck results to the 4th October are provided in the table below

	Aerocool GREEN	Zespri GREEN	Aerocool GOLD	Zespri GOLD
Pallets Shipped	9,856	163,965	174	60,787
Pallets Checked	574	10,289	25	4,204
Pallets Fail	30	556	0	337
% Fail	5.2	5.4	0.0	8.0
Adjusted Defect - ROW	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.40
Adjusted Defect - Europe	0.47	0.44	0.38	0.60

GROWER PAYMENTS

The final Kiwistart payment was paid on Friday 29 September. Growers that stood alone outside the pool received 100% of their payment, while growers that elected to share their Kiwistart premium with the pool and remain in the pool, received 2 thirds of their payment with 1 third remaining in the pool. The 1 third that remains in the pool will be distributed over all pooled trays and included as part of the service rebate.

The October progress payment is an average of \$0.30 for GREEN and \$0.04 for GOLD. Ensuring we receive this money on October 13th we will have payment and all documentation in the post to the growers on the same day. The November 15th indicative payment is an average of \$0.30 for GREEN and \$0.12 for GOLD.

In addition to the progress payment a further Taste Zespri and Service Rebate will be made to GREEN growers of approximately \$0.18. A Low Pest catch-up payment will also be made to all qualifying CA trays. A revised OGR forecast will be sent with the October payment reflecting the Kiwistart payment, Low Pest status for CA growers and other small changes.

Aerocool will be deducting in October and November approximately 50% of the total value of the payments made by Zespri towards our postharvest charges. There is on average still \$0.45 to be deducted from progress payments to complete our packing, base coolstorage and logistic charges (this does not include the time related coolstorage charges which are deducted from service payments and are also yet to be completed).

SCORE CARD

It was our intention to send out the latest score card with this copy of the COOLNEWS, however we have not yet received it from Zespri.

avo news



Hope you all enjoyed the taste of summer we just had. Everybody's attitude lifts when there is sun and warmth.

I love this time of year when there is so much change happening in the orchard. Flowers are opening at different rates all over the Bay. You need to have bees in now to get the best chance of pollinating your flowers.

I can feel a big set coming on for the Bay of Plenty and especially for all Aerocool Growers!

There is no magic prescription for growing avocados but having an 'up attitude' is a good start. There is also plenty of good sound advice out there if growers need it and they have only to ask. Please read your Avo Scene and any other relevant literature out there. If you only learn one thing from literature you read, you are increasing your knowledge of how to be successful on your orchard. Read, read, read.

Our export season has begun for those lucky enough to have a crop this year. A letter has gone out to those growers informing them of a pick and pack date. It is not set in concrete but some other substance that dries just as quickly and is hard to shift! Because of the small crop volume in the Bay we have decided to pack every second week so it is more viable for the shed. We are also only packing twice a week so I apologise to growers who would like to pick on the weekend or in the 'other' week. Please understand the logistics of making a small crop work. It is more difficult to manage than a large crop!

Now is a good time to familiarise yourself with the electronic spray diary if you are not already on it. As from the 07 – 08 season, it will be mandatory for everyone to be on the electronic spray diary.

It is a quirky programme and difficult to negotiate your way around but once you have mastered it, it is not too frustrating. Perhaps I will invite Edwina from the AIC to come and demonstrate how to enter a spray, a fertiliser, edit it and print out the correct document.

Have a play around with it and do what the kids do. Don't be afraid to push buttons!

We have some great new representatives for the Avocado Growers Association. I think Ashby

Whitehead and Andrew Darling will only add value and strength to our industry. They have bucket loads of experience in horticulture and as a young industry it is just what we need. Ashby talks about production being a key issue for sustainability. It is the first thing we have to get right if we are to grow and be seen as a serious competitor to other global nations. We do not want a repeat of this season!

Things To Do On Your Orchard Now

- ❖ Get bees in if you haven't already.
- ❖ Keep the grass shorter so bees concentrate on the flowers in your trees and not on flowers on your orchard floor.
- ❖ Apply boron sprays @ 80g/100L @ cauliflower, 15% flowering and 30 – 50% flowering. (Check photo's in your grower's manual). If properly timed boron sprays go on they increase potential for floral development, increase pollen viability, increase pollen tube growth down pistil and increase potential for ovule fertilization. All that means is boron enhances the chance for a better fruit set.
- ❖ Keep an eye on your tensiometers. We had a very dry September so if you have irrigation use it over flowering.
- ❖ Apply any recommended fertilisers on time. (Very important).
- ❖ Watch out for leaf roller. Thrip seems to have wintered over on some orchards that didn't do a clean up spray. You are limited to what you can apply now with bees in. Success for leaf roller and Calypso for Thrip.
- ❖ It is not recommended to apply copper over flowering.
- ❖ Mulch if you need to.

Enjoy the spring. A time for new growth and rejuvenation.

Therese Temple
Avocado Field Manager