

## A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

October has been a month to forget - cool, cloudy and very windy – all the ingredients kiwifruit plants don't need in the early stages of canopy and flower development.

As a result of this weather pattern you need to look at the following factors –

1. Crop loading – current crop estimates are nearly completed and will help decisions such as flower thinning, removal of non-fruiting laterals and what damage the weather has caused to overall flower numbers.
2. Canopy development – consideration should be given to foliar feeds in conjunction with pre-flower insecticide sprays to give the canopy a 'boost'. Leaves have a 'cold air' look – small leathery and knocked about, all of which will affect the ability of the plant to photosynthesise properly and inevitably, the crop performance.
3. Pollination – male flower numbers in a lot of orchards are lower than normal and may mean that pollen production is affected and the supply of supplementary pollen for artificial application could be short. Have a look to satisfy yourself that you have enough flowers or be in a position of being able to organise extra pollen supply.
4. Soil temperatures are still around 13° – 14° – not conducive to rapid nitrogen uptake to invigorate the vines. Revisit your side dressing programme to coincide with warmer weather if possible.
5. In a number of orchards there has been evidence of a 'secondary' bud burst, the result of cold temperatures. Flowers on the later laterals will tend to be out of 'sync' with early flowers and run the risk of increasing variability in maturity time.
6. Keep a close eye on the orchards progress – change can be rapid and try

and be in a position to have canopy requirements dealt with in a timely manner.

Hopefully, the winds will decrease, sunshine hours improve and the vines respond to warmer conditions to assist in producing a quality crop.

## TECHNICAL UPDATE

Every year there are a number of challenges that are put in front of us and it is **how we deal with those challenges that will make the difference**. So this year one of those challenges is the cooler windy spring that may be impacting on your canopy development. Another is the management of the canopy and bud numbers as a result of the cooler temperatures. For those that attended our recent spring field day this was discussed.

Just because you have always done it is not a reason for continuing down the same pathway, so please keep an open mind, identify your fruit loading, canopy makeup and wood quality and then work out the most appropriate management plan for those particular circumstances. Remember the key principles in the last Cool News on canopy management point 4.

You are going to spend an amount of money on canopy management so please consider spending it early on squeeze tipping, leader work, removing unproductive shoots and identifying next years canes. Try not to leave until after Christmas and be faced with cutting and putting on the deck what was potential fruit dry matter.

### Other considerations

- There are a large number of trebles on some orchards so we need to think about the timing of removal and in a **few** cases how many of them to take off, 1 or 2? We need to know the counts to make that decision.
- Think about foliar feeding to assist the canopy development with the far from perfect spring conditions and if you are

able to include in your regular spray program the cost is minimal. This will also assist any orchards that have been affected by frost.

- This time of the year is a good opportunity to look at your frost control and have a clear plan of whether or not it is appropriate going forward. There may be some things you can do that will not cost a heap.
- By now the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of squeezing should be almost completed. Think about the ease of this activity (for next year now) doing it early as you can clearly see your target growing tips. Two rounds, say, one at 0.30 cents and one at 0.50 cents a bay (0.80cents total) is not as efficient or cost effective as three, one at 0.15 cents, one at 0.20 cents and one at 0.30cents (0.65 cents total). Often you only need to work between set wires per round.
- "Manage your contractor don't be managed by him". Supervision is the key.
- If not happy then revisit at contractor cost. Suggest you don't leave feedback until contractor is finished but visit every day or half day if possible.

You will by now be aware that we are GPS mapping (not the ones we already have) all orchards and subsequently have monitor bays set up and bud counting completed. This will allow us to better understand the facts so we can set up an individual plan of action for you from the results.

We are not trying to be smart arses with our thinking but merely trying to develop the most appropriate cost efficient management system to assist orchard gate return. We are trying to lift the bar for everyone, Aerocool included.

At the Aerocool Birley site we have a number of permanent casual staff who we would like to retain in work associated with Aerocool. Some have on-orchard experience. If you have a requirement for some on-orchard help (bud thinning, male pruning, other) then please give

June a ring on 5727365 at the Birley site for details.

A small number of growers attended the Aerocool arranged Zespri Electronic spray diary demonstration. There are a number of enhancements that have been added

If you are considering upgrading your load out area what a great time to be thinking about it seriously. Did you realise that a ton of rubble is \$4.25 and a ton of "real metal" GAP 20mm is \$14.20 ex the Fulton Hogan Quarry plus GST and transport. Hugh or Dave can help you organise this if you would like. Just slipped that in -how subtle was that!

## AEROCOOL Hens and Chicks Day Out.

Seats for the bus trip are still available if you would like to attend this day out in the fresh air. Please phone Pat at our Mount Office on 5727300.

Date Friday November 10<sup>th</sup> Meet at Aerocool Mount Site

67 Aerodrome Rd at 8.15am

Bus leaves 8.30am

Returns 5.30pm

A pickup point is the Te Puna Hall at 8.45am

It's going to be a great day!!

## REMINDER

### Kiwifruit Growers Meeting

A Growers meeting is being held at the Mount Cossi Club, 54 Miro St, Mt Maunganui, (near Blake Park)

**On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November at 3.30pm.**

This is an important meeting that we encourage all growers to attend.

There will be ample opportunity for grower questions and discussion throughout the meeting.

# payment news

## **EUREPGAP**

Yes it is that time of the year again!! Rosalie will be contacting you soon to arrange a suitable time for your inspection. If you are ready and want the inspection completed now, please phone Rosalie direct – 0272868108.

There are no changes that effect growers directly this season.

We would like to have 85% of the inspections completed before Christmas.

Please phone Chris if you have any questions regarding Eurepgap.

## **KIWIGREEN**

Kiwigreen planning for the coming season is under way. Next week you will be receiving a mail out with information, registrations and your Export Summary Report.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please don't hesitate to phone Chris and she will talk you through it. You will all be well aware of the implications of scale finds in your crops next year, hence I have included some reference material for you. Monitoring will commence mid December for GOLD and mid January for GREEN.

We trust that all is going well on your orchards and look forward to seeing you all on November 8<sup>th</sup> at the Growers Meeting.

## **GROWER PAYMENTS**

### **Green**

The November progress payment is \$0.30 cents for Green along with approximately \$0.15 cents for time coolstorage increment payment and \$0.05 cents for Class II. Therefore, a total of \$0.50 cents per tray will be paid. From this Aerocool will be deducting approximately \$0.15 cents per tray. The December indicative payment for Green is \$0.67 cents, of which Aerocool will be deducting approximately \$0.28 cents per tray.

### **Gold**

The November progress payment is \$0.07 cents for Gold of which Aerocool will be deducting approximately \$0.03 cents per tray. The November progress payment is also \$0.07 cents for Gold.

We hope to have both payments from Zespri on the 15 November. Ensuring we receive this money on the 15<sup>th</sup> we will make the payment and send all documentation to the growers on the same day.

Aerocool will also be making an interim Class II payment on the same day. It is forecasted that the Class II payment will be approximately \$0.05 cents per Class 1 GREEN tray.

## **BIRLEY SITE EXPANSION**

The concrete slab for the new coolstore and packhouse extension has been poured with building work expected to be well advanced by Christmas. Erection of steel framing will be starting next week. Existing Lynx grader is being decommissioned and installed into its new position next week.

Parts for the new Compac grader will be arriving on site within the next 2 weeks. The installation of the grader will cover a 5 week period so the grader will be operational by mid January.



# avo news

The Bay of Plenty is collectively holding its breath waiting to see what sort of fruit set has occurred in the Bay! October certainly gave us all sorts of weather and not much of it conducive to fruit-set. The incredible winds were some of the worst I've seen and we were trying to harvest during that period! It was challenging to say the least. However fruit set still occurred two years ago when we had such a cold spring and early summer.

We have packed export fruit for a month now and export pack-outs have generally been high, so congratulations to those growers who have sent in such a quality product. The highest export pack-out so far is 88%. This has been a general trend, so with not much fruit available for the local market, fruit has been fetching good money. The windfalls that ended up in the local market dipped the prices momentarily but because of low crop volume the demand for avocados is still strong. We have been packing into the Woolworths Black Box and the presentation is exceptional. All fruit are placed the same way and each fruit labelled which makes for a very good looking box of avocados.

Below on the left is a tray of local market in a conventional box that was packed before export started. Next to it is a tray of fruit in the black box taken in Australia. This presentation is key in trying to get more dollars for your fruit.



In the last Cool News there was an invitation to all Kiwifruit 'and' Avocado Ladies to have a day out on Aerocool and we heard that some Avocado Growers who only read the back page were unaware of the event. A day out to visit some lovely gardens during the Tauranga Garden & Artfest and we are providing lunch as well. Ladies if you would like to be part of this enjoyable day please phone Pat at our Mount office on 5727300.

**Date: Friday November 10<sup>th</sup>.** Meet at Aerocool Mount site 67 Aerodrome Road @ 8.15.

**Bus departs at 8.30 am: Bus returns @ 5.30pm:**

## Things To Do On Your Orchard in November

- ❖ Pray for a good fruit set! (High Priority)
- ❖ Apply fertiliser early this month to help produce adequate spring flush. Heavy flowering and fruit set may impact on how much spring flush is produced.
- ❖ Keep a close eye on your tensiometers as the trees need a lot more water over flowering and fruit set. Not having enough moisture in the soil can affect your spring flush and the retention of your new set.
- ❖ When flowering is finished apply a post flowering insecticide if necessary to clean up leaf roller and thrip. Keep a close eye on the new flush for leaf roller as they will quickly move from leaves to fruit when not addressed. Check the Avocado Website for Chemical Choice and with-holding periods for harvest.
- ❖ When flowering is finished apply a copper spray onto new fruit set and existing fruit if any. Remember Team are paying a premium to growers who apply eight coppers in the 07-08 season.
- ❖ Now is a good time to thin out your orchard if it is becoming too shaded. Productivity will suffer if orchards are thinned too late. Let there be light is the key.
- ❖ Make sure everything is up to date for your food/safety audits if you have yet to harvest. Fertilizer Diary, Spray Diary, AIC Registration Form.
- ❖ Keep a diary of everything you do on your orchard. Part of being a good orchardist is to observe everything that happens on your orchard. What is your flowering doing? Have I got flush coming? How much or how little rain did we have in September? What effect could the wind have had on your fruit-set? Was it this cold last year? Record all inputs and significant weather occurrences.

Therese Temple  
Avocado Field Manager