



“Working for the Grower”

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS
TO YOU
ALL**



Newsletter

December 2011

Avogreen Review

Over the past few weeks CropCheck Ltd Directors have been involved in talks with other Operators, AIC and the AvoGreen Working group (comprising grower, Pack House, AGA, merchant, orchard contractor and AvoGreen Operator representatives).

Recommendations from the Working Group, have gone to an AIC Board meeting, and we await further decisions on recommended changes. The changes will be designed to make the AvoGreen system easier to comprehend, fairer to all participants, and more in line with the key strategies AvoGreen was designed for:

1. To increase industry export pack out rates
2. To facilitate “all-market” status
3. To provide a point of differentiation in the market by demonstrating sustainable production
4. To reduce quarantine issues



Some of these objectives will need to be measured. For instance, growers with good record-keeping of pack-outs before and after using AvoGreen will be sought. If you are such a grower, CropCheck Ltd would love to hear from you.

We will keep you posted about any changes which go ahead.

Reflections of the first season of Mandatory Monitoring- from an AvoGreen Operator

Since the AIC Road Show introductions of mandatory AvoGreen monitoring in April 2010, growers have been gradually introduced to the detail, either by training as an Owner Operator, or by acquiring information from AIC articles, discussion groups, AvoGreen Operators etc.

With GAP requirements also thrown into the mix for this season’s large export crop, growers have often felt bombarded by regulations and details they would rather ignore. Feelings have run high about all these impositions, and consequently we are still seeing ‘maverick’ growers flaunting the system with false monitoring reports, and spraying regardless of the actual levels of pests.



By the same token, so much information has been disseminated (read the full article on the **Articles** page of our website or we can post the article to you on request).

Light Year Crop



In seasons with little or no fruit, there seems less incentive to monitor and spray. Fruit tend not to hang in large bunches in such a year, so insect pests have fewer places to hide. However, returns per fruit can be higher, particularly on the local market, when the majority of growers have the same light crop.

AvoGreen compliance in a light-cropping year is maintained provided every spray applied is justified by a monitoring result or other recognised justification. Once an AvoGreen plan is in place, you still have the choice of whether or not to export, until picking time.

A major benefit of regular monitoring over periods of maximum risk, is that pest-specific sprays can be optimally timed according to the life stage of the pest, so that damage to the fruit can be prevented early. Low thresholds for Leafroller and Thrip allow a spray as soon as a pest is found.



The periods of maximum risk are:

Leafroller – now to the end of April

Greenhouse Thrip – mid January to end of April

Six-spotted Mite – mid August to December

Scale – September to October, and April to May when crawlers are most likely to be present.

Compared with calendar spraying, or preventative spraying, sprays applied according to a structured AvoGreen monitoring can reduce the number and toxicity of sprays used. “The tactic of only monitoring when you intend to spray is a very high risk approach that is likely to fail to deliver any benefit.” (AvoGreen Manual)

Consider also the large pest pressures seen over the past season. If you are contemplating not spraying at all due to lack of crop, be mindful of a build-up of pests, particularly Leafroller and Scale, which could impact on the following season.

CropCheck Ltd is aware of many orchards where high winds, frost, hail, high crop load stress, phytophthora and/or Six-spotted mite have decimated the prospects of a return crop this season. Our thoughts are with you, and if you have dealt to the causes of tree stress, we would encourage you to begin monitoring again no later than August 2012 to ensure Six-spotted mite and Leafroller can be dealt with early before flowering.

For updates on pest numbers throughout the season click on **Pest Alerts** on our website:

www.cropcheck.co.nz

www.cropcheck.co.nz

Flower Growers

2-spotted mite are here already, a sign of warmer weather. 2-spot are a big problem in flowers being exported to the US. There are some reasonably effective predators, but with the sprays required for US markets, these are wiped out, making a tough battle even harder.



Citrus Growers



Kelly's Citrus Thrip numbers are on the increase so it is advisable that monitoring is increased to 2 weekly now to avoid damage to your citrus crops, particularly lemon or limes.

Tamarillo Growers

Now is the time to be very vigilant for Psyllid. This is something we can help you with, so please call us for help with monitoring, both to find the critters and check effectiveness of sprays.

Tamarillo Recipe - Tamarillo Meringue Log

4 tamarillos
1/3 cup caster sugar
300ml cream
2 tablespoons icing sugar
8 meringue nests (available prepared from your supermarket)



Peel the tamarillos by pouring boiling water over them. Let stand for 5 mins then remove the skins. Slice the tamarillos. Place in a bowl, sprinkle with sugar and stand for 30 minutes. Puree in a food processor.

Whip the cream and add the icing sugar. Combine about 4 tablespoons of the puree with the cream. Place a good spoonful of the cream on 7 of the meringue nests. Carefully sandwich each one together standing them on one side to form a log. Place the last unfilled nest at the end. Chill.

Just before serving, drizzle with some of the remaining puree. Serves 4-6.

© Jan Bilton, NZ Tamarillo Growers Association.
(http://www.tamarillo.com/desserts_and_baking)

www.cropcheck.co.nz



Meet the CropCheck Team

With each newsletter, we will introduce you to one member of our team.

Maggie Gething



Maggie spent many years working as a veterinarian in Europe and New Zealand before retiring from the profession and joining Cropcheck as an avocado monitor. As a vet she gained postgraduate qualifications with a thesis on *Cheyletiella*, the so-called 'fur mite' of rabbits, cats and dogs. Subsequently, in her day-to-day work in small animal practice and in the animal health industry, she would frequently examine animals' skins for external parasites, so she is well used to searching for and identifying mites and insect pests. Although the pest species Maggie sees in orchards are different from those found on animals, the principles are the same!

Maggie plays the oboe, and met Jojetta through their shared love of music. They regularly get together with another friend to have fun playing trios, which they sometimes perform for Jojetta's piano students.

Maggie works as a relief monitor for CropCheck in the Katikati area.



Farmlands Card Holders



We are now approved Farmlands Card Partners, so please let us know if you have a Farmlands Card and wish to pay using your card.

Christmas Hours

Our staff will be monitoring as usual throughout the holiday period, though they will be having a break on the Statutory Holidays. Paula will be having a few days off immediately after Christmas and Esther will be having some days off with her children, so you may get a visit from Maggie, Jojetta or Cathy.



ENQUIRE NOW



Avocado Monitoring
Citrus Monitoring
Flower Monitoring
Tamarillo Monitoring
AvoGreen Training

The Avocado Season - a progressive poem

Ah, relief
Fruits picked
Bees gone
New fruit?

(Time for something new here, any suggestions?)



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