



"Working for the Grower"
Happy 2nd
Birthday CropCheck



Newsletter
April 2012

The End of Season Reflection

Many of you will have attended the AGA/AIC discussion meeting to hear and air feelings of discontent about marketing of fruit in the season just completed. We have heard that many growers are saying that not enough was done to ensure value for their large crop. We only hope that some positives have been learnt and that for the next big crop, perhaps in 2012/2013, the new markets exporters and AIC are currently working on, will be available..

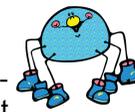
Congratulations to those whose fruit reached 80% plus packout due to vigilant monitoring and timely sprays. Jojette and Ross' packout was just 70%, unfortunately, because of severe winds in November. Wind, followed by a massive infestation of six-spotted mite, meant there was severe leaf-drop in a time when fruit should have been doing the last of its sizing and new shoots should have been creating the buds for the following year's crop. Fruit rapidly coloured from the extra sunlight penetration, reducing further the number of available export fruit.

They have therefore taken a chainsaw to pick the last of the coloured fruit. They have no problem cutting back 9 year old trees that have never been pruned, when there are no new fruit!

The recent AIC pruning trial field day, plus pack house field days about pruning, have been very timely. When an Auckland friend said to Jojette "It looks like a giant has sat on your trees!", you know she's cut a lot off!

The need for pruning is also evident in the packout of some growers who may feel that Avogreen® is not working for them when fruit high up in the tree has been infested with thrip and leafroller but fruit lower down was monitored and found to be clean. Have they considered whether spray is reaching up high enough? Obviously, it would take much longer for pest monitors to use cherry pickers to check fruit, so the cost would be significantly increased. Not to mention training pest monitors to use cherry pickers, transport and OSH requirements. CropCheck Ltd have not offered a cherry picker monitoring service for these reasons.

We would encourage growers with trees higher than 4m to seriously consider reducing the height to encourage fruit to form lower for cheaper picking, monitoring, better spray penetration and access for cherry pickers.



Pruning is clearly beneficial to restoring the balance of roots to shoots in avocado trees. It has been seen that pruned trees return bigger, less wind-damaged fruit within 2 years.

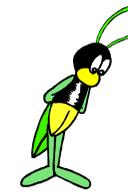
So get stuck in if you have little or no crop this season. Just be careful with those chainsaws or call in the experts who have the experience and knowledge from years of avocado tree pruning.

Following an "Off" year, many of you will hopefully set a good crop this coming Spring. For growers not monitoring through the winter, we recommend a monitor between the end of June and the beginning of August to check for presence of six-spotted mite well in advance of flowering.

GAP audits are still occurring even this late in the season. Jojette had the privilege of such an audit a couple of weeks back. Luckily she had most of the paperwork needed and it only took 1.5 hours, plus the preparation time, but she has heard horror stories of a 3 hour NZGAP audit! We will certainly be lobbying the AIC to amalgamate GAP and Avogreen audits for reasons of time and cost efficiency! Good luck to those still to be audited.

Soil and Leaf testing

Soil and leaf testing should be done at this time to enable winter and spring fertiliser applications to improve chances of fruit set. CropCheck Ltd offers a soil and leaf sampling service, and will send samples to R.J.Hill Laboratories for analysis on your behalf. For more information, go to our website or phone Jojette or Cathy. Have you thought about Phosphonate testing?



Registering for export

As many of you will be aware, you need to be getting organised to register for export. But are you aware, that if you have sprayed without a monitoring to show justification for that spray, your crop may not be accepted for export? Also, you need to be registered and monitoring regularly now, or again you may find you will not be accepted for export. So go and have a close look in your orchard and see if you really have no fruit; we are quite aware there are orchards that have said they have no fruit, but when we have looked, we have found fruit in the tops of the trees. So do yourselves a favour and have a closer look now. This is a low crop this year and prices will be up.



Tamarillo Growers

Psyllid's should be nearly at the end of their cycle. If you have not been monitoring for them, but instead calendar spraying, consider giving monitoring a try from early November this year? You could well find it cuts down on your spray costs, an advantage to your budget, plus the reduction of sprays in your environment.



Citrus Growers

There are a lot of Flower Moth around at the moment and scale eggs are about to hatch

Flower Growers

For the hydrangea growers, the season is over and it is now pruning time. We trust your season has been a good one.

Greenhouse Thrip

In the last 3 weeks we have seen a very rapid increase in thrip numbers. If you have fruit, you need to increase your monitoring to at least 2 weekly until they disappear. This has caught many out because they have been very late.

Avocado Recipe

With the abundance of avocado's around, we are all looking for something to do with them. This recipe looks interesting and could well be worth a try.

Avocado Stuffed Potato

2 medium-sized potatoes

1 avocado

10g butter

1 medium sized onion, finely chopped

Salt and pepper

Bake whole potato at 220 c till soft, but firm. Cool.

Cut evenly in half and scoop out flesh, allowing a small rim inside potato for shape. Blend or mash avocado with potato flesh and mix with butter, onion and seasoning. Replace in potato shell and top with a knob of butter. Bake at 200 c until heated through and lightly browned on top. Dust with paprika.

Grated cheese or breadcrumbs can be sprinkled on top when reheated. Serve with sour cream.



Meet the CropCheck Team

With each newsletter, we have been introducing you to one member of our team. Unfortunately there is only one member of the team left and he is too busy to write a spoil for this newsletter, so I'm sorry, you will have to wait till the next newsletter to learn about the last of the CropCheck directors.

Website

We are trying to keep this updated on a regular basis. If there is anything you particularly would like on the website, please let us know. (www.cropcheck.co.nz)

Upcoming Field-days

There have been some very interesting forums and discussions recently as well as the AIC and Apata field days on pruning; it was great meeting many new growers there. We have been in contact with AIC, Farmlands, and Hortcentre and there are no new field days coming up that we are aware of.

Changes to AvoGreen Protocol

There are some changes now in place to the AvoGreen protocol. The ones that will mostly affect you are:

1. A pre-harvest monitor is now mandatory up to 14 days before harvest
2. There is a change in the way Leafroller is calculated. The calculation will be for Leafroller on leaf (now 6%) or on fruit (2 %), not combined.
3. If you are a casual monitoring client, you must monitor a minimum of 4 times in a year.
4. Greenhouse Thrip back-to-back sprays must be not longer than 21 days apart, preferably 10-14 days in warm conditions.
5. A monitoring report giving an over threshold result expires after 6 weeks and cannot be used to justify a spray once it expires.

More information will be available on the AIC website shortly or by contacting AIC or ourselves.



ENQUIRE NOW



Avocado Monitoring

Citrus Monitoring

Flower Monitoring

Tamarillo Monitoring

AvoGreen Training

Sayings:

If it wasn't for the last minute,
nothing would ever get done



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