



“Working with the Grower to Create Healthy Orchards”



**Newsletter
April 2022**

From the Office

We are still waiting for David to be admitted to Waikato; he is on the urgent list, but there is still a delay while they wait for the Omicron wave to pass and staffing levels to improve in the hospital.

Unfortunately, we are backed into a corner by the latest wage increase that the government has forced upon us all. It has been an extremely challenging 2 years for everyone, but especially the Avocado growers who have had their income ripped away by continual lock-downs, with the hospitality sector grinding to a halt or operating at reduced levels across the nation.

Our income is also down significantly as many orchards have massively reduced their monitoring. And now the government has forced another wage increase into the system “to improve the standard of living for workers”. We all know that unless the government changes the tax brackets, the only ones who benefit from the increased wages, are the government with increased taxes.

So with much heartache for having to push something onto an already struggling sector, we need to pass on an increase to everyone. This increase will be as small as we possibly can and we will inform you by letter before the next invoicing at the beginning of May.

Other News

In other news, Barbara is away in Australia for the next month as she welcomes her new grandbaby. Congratulations Barbara and Alfred, we are looking forward to hearing news of the safe arrival. Cathy and Argine will be looking after Te Puke/Welcome Bay orchards while Barbara is away.

In sadder news, Kazel is leaving us at the end of this week, to concentrate on her auditing job with JP Exports. Thank you for all the wise advice and support you have given us over many years Kazel. We wish you well in your future endeavours. Caz, Cathy and Argine will be looking after Kazel’s orchards now.

China Growers

If you are still compliant for China, please keep in touch with our staff to make sure they are aware when they need to get in for remonitoring or of any sprays that you have applied.



Bug Update—Avocados

Leafroller - Leafroller numbers have dropped, but still present on some orchards.

Greenhouse Thrip – It is proving to be a bad year for Thrip, with persistent numbers being found. We are also seeing a lot on leaves, which can indicate there are a lot of Thrip on fruit in the tops of the trees. As most of the fruit is high up in the trees this year, we recommend you take action if there are a lot of Thrip on leaves, even if the numbers are not high on the fruit we are able to reach to monitor. **Note:** there must be Thrip on fruit to justify a spray. Unless you are a China grower, you can make the choice whether the cost of a spray is justified, by the amount of fruit you have. For China growers, you only have to take action if there are Juvenile or NZ Flower Thrip present.

NZ Flower Thrip - No change here. This insect is mostly found around flowering time.

Six Spotted Mite - Mites are starting to build up now as all the orchards are applying back to back Thrip sprays, which is wiping out the beneficials that control the mites. We could be in for a bad mite season. Talk to your advisors about controlling mites early.

Scale - Scale numbers have been increasing lately. These will usually disappear after Thrip sprays with a label claim for Scale, have been applied. If you are not spraying, you will need to be aware that scale could reach threshold.

Fullers Rose weevil (FRW) damage and live - There is still some damage being seen from FRW, though not severe. We have also seen damage around from Bronze Beetle (which is similar); this will have occurred in early Summer.

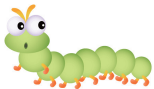
Mealybug - we are seeing very few Mealybug at the moment.

Natural Predators—As we go into winter, with a large number of sprays being applied for Thrip, the number of natural predators will be greatly reduced. After a harder spray, which many of the Thrip sprays are, the first insect to return to the orchard is the spider. Stethorus Bifodus, which feed on mites can take quite a while to return.

Congratulations!



Soil Test Time—book in with the office or your monitor.



Safety News

Recently in our Health & Safety briefing, we talked about being aware of dangers. We can get so familiar with our work, we do not observe new or common hazards.

Currently one of the biggest hazards is fallen fruit. This is a slip and trip hazard and with so much fruit on the orchard floors at the moment, it is very hard to avoid stepping on over-ripe fruit. As fruit is constantly falling, we cannot expect growers to remove all fruit before we enter an orchard. Instead, we need to be careful that we step carefully.



Please notify us of any sprays applied in all crops.

Have you heard of Safetywash? Cathy met the owner of this company and was talking to him about his products; he designs and builds wash down systems for hazardous substances. We were talking about how it could be used on large orchards in case of a spray accident. For information, contact Peter through www.safetywash.co.nz.

Blueberries—There has been a little rain in the Waikato to relieve the very parched land, but more is still needed. We have been following up on one of the insects we find a lot in both indoor and outdoor blocks; the Springtail. We are sending specimens off to Rob Silberbauer at BBNZ in Christchurch today, to double check our identification.

Springtail is an insect that usually feeds in the soil, but sometimes can be found in plants. There are thousands of subspecies of Springtail, from round ones, to long skinny ones. Some can feed on plant matter or fungi, others are carnivores and feed on other insects. Some hop (hence the springtail name), others just run fast and don't hop, which are the ones we mostly find. They can easily be mistaken for Thrip, and have been on the Blueberry fruit.

Currently we are listing Springtail as a major pest, because of the large numbers we are finding, but after further discussion, these may be moved to a beneficial. We are looking forward to hearing back from Rob.

We are now picking a small sample of fruit from each export property and checking some of those fruit under a higher powered microscope. The reason we are doing this is to make sure there are no insects being detected on fruit going to export. We are trying to detect where any bugs may be getting onto export fruit.

Weather events



Have you seen the regular weather updates on our Facebook page? David has been checking the weather sites when he is well enough and sharing them on FB for you.

At last we have had good rain in the Bay of Plenty, with flooding in some places. The heavy rain may have caused stress on some trees, as we saw a bit of leaf drop with no mites present.

Goodbye Vaccine Passes and Mandates

I know many will be heaving a sigh of relief as the Omicron wave passes and life can return to some semblance of normal. We will still be keeping up our hygiene policies and being aware of this nasty bug. At least now there should start to be a greater availability of workers for picking and packing.

Now is a good time to draw together and start to rebuild and heal the divides that have been created in our society over the last few months.



Feijoa Season



Feijoa Season and Guava Moth invasion time. This is a battle we will win with the help of pheromone traps and a homemade trap which works well. Contact Cathy for the recipe.

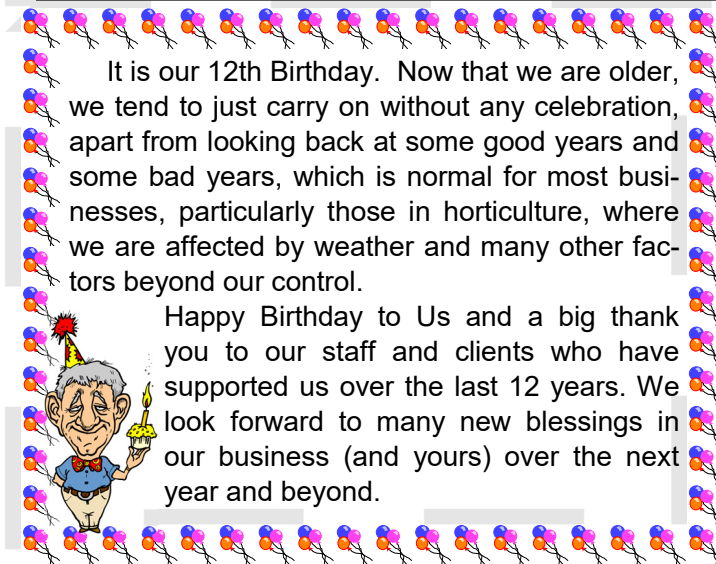
Please note: Even though we have good knowledge in insects, we cannot advise you to stop spraying and use only predators. We also cannot advise you what chemicals to spray. Please work with your industry advisers for best advice.

ENQUIRE NOW

Crop Monitoring



Avocado
Citrus
Blueberries
Export Flowers
Other Crops
Soil & Leaf Tests



It is our 12th Birthday. Now that we are older, we tend to just carry on without any celebration, apart from looking back at some good years and some bad years, which is normal for most businesses, particularly those in horticulture, where we are affected by weather and many other factors beyond our control.

Happy Birthday to Us and a big thank you to our staff and clients who have supported us over the last 12 years. We look forward to many new blessings in our business (and yours) over the next year and beyond.

Contacts:

Office: 07 281 1034

Cathy Harris mob: 027 235 3919

David Harris mob: 0274 988 440

Email: sales@cropcheck.co.nz

Website: www.cropcheck.co.nz

Address: 424 Upper Ohauti Road, Ohauti RD3, Tauranga 3173



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