

Future Orchard 2012 – Orange, New South Wales Orchard Walk November 2006

11am to 12pm D.P.I. presentation to both Cherry and Apple growers regarding district problems with helleboris, budworm and western flower thrip.

12noon to 1pm Lunch provided free of charge courtesy of local NSW Farmers Orange Fruit Section.

1pm Orchard walk commenced at the two monitoring blocks of Gala and Pink Lady that are established at the Orange D.P.I. Research Station.

Consultant John Wilton was very critical of the:

- Block preparation (not Fumigated)
- Nursery stock (small single rod tree)
- Tree nutrition (thought these may be some repellent diseases)
- Row spacing (John believed these would be little chance of reaching high yield of 40 + tonne per hectare with current blocks).

Recommendations for Monitoring Block.

- Next planting fumigate soil-chloropictron or Formalin.
- Check replant disease (was done by D.P.I.)
- Improved nursery stock (virus tested stock)
- Leaf analysis re potassium etc.
- Use M.A.P. fertiliser at planting.

The growers then moved across to D.P.I. Fuji block that was under net.

John Wilton's comments were a little more encouraging to a now deflated D.P.I. staff.

- Block already achieves 40 tonnes plus/ per hectare.
- Thinning 1 ATS N.A.A. 12ppm Etherel 50ml per 100litres, very good results.
- Next year fruit bud should be O.K.
- Some branches need removing for better light penetration (this has already been carried out by D.P.I. staff).
- Regalis applied to some trees – working well.
- Research shows 20% increase in calcium in fruit after regalis programme – reduced shoot activity.

Principle of slowing tree growth down much easier than the opposite problem.

Growers then moved to D.P.I. learning centre for power point presentation by John Wilton.

Discussion points were.

- Concern over large sections of bare wood on fruiting arms (especially Fuji) John believed that light was a more important factor than age of branches.
- New Zealand preference to M9 and M26 rootstock.
- John expressed concern over long-term results from pedestrian orchards that have been promoted more recently. Growers expressed concerns due to Australian strict O.H.& S. laws as to costs of ladder work.
- Growers expressed concern that push to increased tonnes per hectare may come at the expense of total marketable fruit per hectare. John believed if the tree was managed in balance “This would not be the case”.
- The application of Cylex by hand was discussed to encourage “feathers” on vigorous or shy varieties.
- John recommended irrigation cycles that were maybe not as regular but gave the roots a good soaking with longer intervals.

Meeting closed at 4.30 pm