

Future Orchard 2012 – South Australia Orchard Walk March 2007

30 March 2007

Notes prepared by Facilitator

As per attendance record 30 people attended the meeting and orchard walk.

Guest Speaker - Ron Gordon from Batlow.

Ron gave an excellent power point presentation on his research into the most economical hail net design.

- Extensive travel and research into different designs being used in Europe. Detailed photos to explain the different systems.
- Combining tree trellis with future hail net requirements at time of planting.
- Alternative support posts to eliminate treated posts or expensive hardwood.
- Reduced strength (and cost) of construction due to ability to unload the hail when it builds to a certain weight.
- Lighter structure requires small equipment to erect.
- Two independent engineers came up with very similar recommendations.
- Extensive tests carried out on trial structure erected in Australia.
- First block to be erected in Batlow by the end of May 2007.

Growers were extremely interested in Ron's presentation and keen to go to Batlow to see the first structure when finished.

Amongst the growers that attended was also the regional manager of Rabobank, Scott Maxwell.

Scott was very impressed by Ron's presentation and offered to assist in funding a bus trip to Batlow to see first hand the new design erected.

Ross Wilson moved onto his presentation focusing mainly on the information and value of the website.

Local case studies of some of the monitoring blocks were discussed to interest growers to access the facility.

The Orchard walk then moved to Peter and Julie Darley's orchard "Daydawn" with discussion on Cripps Pink.

- Young tree structure.
- Root stocks.
- Planting row width
- Fruit maturity.
- Yield per hectare.

- Weed management.

The orchard walk then moved to David and Carolyn Gartrell's monitoring block. Discussion took place on Wattleview Bliss.

- Advantages – disadvantages of V trellis.
- Tree vigour.
- Variable crop load.
- Problems of scion rooting re vigour.
- Fruit size, colour, maturity.
- Root stocks.
- Row width.
- Overall tree height.

Orchard Walk finished at 5pm.

D.P.I. Research Involvement.

Anne Mooney from D.P.I. Orange Research Station addressed the growers at David and Carolyn Gartrell's V trellis block on a local Research and Development trial to control apple leaf hoppers.

Damage to both leaves and fruit colour were evident in the trial block with the results available to growers when the various leaf counts have been finalized.

Monitoring Block Growers Meeting. 31/3/07

Meeting 8.30am at Ken and Steve Perry's orchard "Sunnycrest". 8 growers present.

Ross Wilson encouraged growers to identify the most important issues for the group. Some suggestions were.

- Suitable rootstocks – Nursery stock quality.
- Help in growing advanced tree in three years.
- Row spacings.
- Support structures and hail netting.
- Managing yield, size and quality.

The meeting then moved out into the orchard to see the Cripps Pink variety. Discussion then took place on

- Root stocks – Perry's block has adjacent their own trial block of various rootstocks which was of great interest.
- Fruit quality, size and maturity.
- Tree row volume.
- Tree height.

Meeting finished at 11.30am.