

## **Future Orchard 2012 – Huon, Tasmania Orchard Walk March 2007**

Facilitator – Jesse Reader, Serve-Ag P/L

Attendees:

Craig Hornblow, Thomas Frankcombe, Ryan Hankin, Graeme Hankin, Adam, Tim Green, Darren Ashood, S.Reardon, Anthony Reardon, Mark Hankin, Raymond, Scott Price, Nigel Bartells, Paul Francis, Jesse Reader, James Clements, Howard Hansen, Tas. Country Newspaper rep.

The 4th orchard walk for the Tasmanian future orchards group was held at Calvert Bros. Waterloo and Ryan Hankin's at Glendevie, Tasmania. We were kindly hosted by Darren Ashwood at Waterloo for the first part of the orchard walk and by Ryan Hankin and his father for the second part of the walk and meeting.

Attendance was quite good with 18 people including myself. The weather on the day was horrible and rained for the duration of the event. The format was slightly different this time with introductions and discussion done in the orchard to ensure maximum interaction. We spent an hour or so at Waterloo looking at pink ladies and then went 3km up the road to Ryan Hankin's and continued the orchard walk. This was followed by a 'sit down' meeting for the MB group and lunch.

**Craig Hornblow, AGFIRST, Nelson, New Zealand.**

“Managing Cripps Pink harvest and storage for optimum fruit quality and out turn”

The focus for this orchard walk was to discuss Pink Lady harvest and management. Tasmania harvests Pink Ladies as early as the end of March, but as a rule harvest begins around mid April. Pink Lady is still an important apple for Tasmania and this orchard walk and related discussion was very timely.

### **Quality and Out Turn**

Initial discussion in the orchard revolved around looking at the tree and deciding whether or not we thought there was ample light interception and penetration. A good canopy should be exposing fruit sites to 50% or better light levels. We discussed the need for removing any shading through unwanted annual shoot growth however stressed the fact that Cripps Pink are susceptible to sunburn in high temperatures. The group discussed leaf plucking as an option to exposed fruit to light however Craig stressed that this was not the best way to achieve the desired outcome as you are removing a perfectly good leaf that is working for you in storing carbohydrates and cooling.

Looking at the trees at this stage of production and paying close attention to their architecture, you could see that work done during pruning time could save a lot of time before harvest trying to get light and hence colour.

Reflective matting is being used extensively to aid in the colouring of Pink Lady and is another tool that should be used to help colour development.

Maturity management was the next topic for discussion and Retain is widely used in Tasmania to manage this. Cripps Pink are moderate responders to Retain but do not respond the way Gala do. If applied 21-28 days prior to harvest it can delay maturity by up to seven days or by about two picks, i.e. first pick Retain treated fruit happens at the same time as the third pick untreated fruit.

Retain can assist in the following;

- Improved colour due to harvest delay
- Bigger fruit size, fruit grows 1mm/week through harvest
- Greener background colour
- Firmer fruit in storage
- Fewer incidences of greasy fruit
- Reduced pre-harvest drop

Several important notes on maturity include;

- Fruit pressure declines about 0.3kg/week
- Sugar lifts 0.3 to 0.5 brix/week
- Although a firm fruit, Cripps Pink is easily bruised. Do not harvest while fruit is wet and temperatures cold.
- Cripps Pink needs to be selectively picked by colour every four to five days to minimise mixed maturity within the line.

Some discussion was had on internal browning disorder. It is a serious problem in fruit that has been stored for medium or longer terms. Preliminary findings into this disorder indicate the following;

- There are possible three different types of IBD
- The more advanced the harvest maturity the higher the risk.
- Dwarf rootstocks and trees that have been girdled are more at risk.
- Fruit from cooler growing districts is more at risk.
- Fruit from low crop loads are at high risk as they reach maturity earlier.

Greasy fruit provided some mixed discussion as it can be a big problem and is unacceptable in the market. Development of greasy fruit increases as harvest maturity advances. Pre-harvest treatment with Retain may reduce risk and 'Smart Fresh' is also reported to reduce risk.

### **Future Orchards 2012 website**

Craig provided an insight into the Future Orchards 2012 website for those who were unaware of the site and encouraged people to utilise this resource.

### **New Planting Options 2007 and beyond**

As a final discussion for the day, the MB group talk about new planting options for 2007 and beyond. Craig stressed the need to do your homework and plant the best available tree and stock you can find today as it is an industry in constant change. There will always be talk of something better around the corner but that doesn't always materialise. Plant the best thing available and manage it well was the message and their will be adequate returns. The thing available should include the following characteristics;

- Virus tested root stocks.

- Virus tested scion varieties
- Thoroughly tested budwood sources certified true to type.
- Varieties and clones that have been adequately tested under your local conditions and shown to give satisfactory performance.
- Varieties capable of attaining critical mass in the market place to stimulate continuing consumer demand at a premium price.