

Volume 7, No. 13**September 4th, 2007****This issue contains:**

- **Pin Point and Storage Scab**
- **ReTain®**
- **Weed and Grass Control**
- **Days to Harvest**
- **Soil Fumigation**

Pin Point and Storage Scab

The incidents of apple scab are up considerably this year as a result of infection periods in late May and June. These scab lesions are a source of spores for pin point and storage scab. Pin point scab results from infections that occur late in the growing season. It appears as small black dots on the skin of the apple. In some cases, the fruit infections do not appear until after the fruit has been placed in storage, however, the infections do occur prior to harvest. A fungicide application in late August or early September can help to prevent these late season scab infections and provide some protection against storage rots. If you have not already done so, a fungicide treatment would be highly recommended in blocks that have leaf and/or fruit scab. Scab lesions that appear to be inactive as a result of early season fungicide applications can become active again in the fall under cool wet weather conditions. When selecting a fungicide days to harvest must be taken into consideration. The best option for a fungicide is Maestro/Captan which has a seven day pre-harvest interval and has some activity against storage rot.

ReTain®

This year's apple crop is larger and timely harvesting fruit at the optimum maturity for storage may become an issue particularly if harvest labour is limited. In order to manage harvesting, growers do have the option of applying Retain® at this time of year to control premature drop of McIntosh and Spartan. ReTain® is a naturally occurring growth regulator that inhibits the production of ethylene which influences fruit maturity, ripening and fruit drop. ReTain® is best noted for its ability to reduce fruit drop and extending the harvest window. ReTain® can also provide the benefit of fruit going in and coming from storage with better firmness. The recommended treatment period for ReTain® is four weeks prior to the anticipated harvest time. For McIntosh this would mean that ReTain® should be applied as soon as possible, depending upon the strain and orchard location, which determines the harvest period. The application rate for ReTain® on McIntosh is one 333 gram water soluble bag per acre with the surfactant Sylgard 309. Use the surfactant at a concentration of 0.5 to 1.0% (v/v) (i.e. 500 to 1,000 ml per 1,000 litres of water). Apply with enough water to ensure thorough wetting of the fruit and leaves while avoiding spray run-off. ReTain® should only be applied to healthy trees in order to obtain the full

response of this growth regulator. In the case of Cortland and Jonagold the reduction or delay in ripening can lead to firmer apples and reduced greasiness. If ReTain® is applied to either of these two cultivars the rate should be reduced by one third of that recommended for McIntosh. The one advantage of applying a stop drop at this time of year is that temperature does not play a role as it does with NAA when applied in late September.

Weed and Grass Control

Looking at orchards this past week I have noted that there has been good weed growth as a result of recent rains. Weed and grass growth at this point in the growing season will have very little if any impact on tree growth and fruit size. Tall weed growth can complicate the task of harvesting and may shade the fruit on the lower limbs. The two options (mowing and herbicide) for the control of this weed growth are not ideal. In most cases mowing will knock fruit off limbs as crop load has bent the limbs closer to the ground. The application of an herbicide is risky in that spray drift can spot fruit on the lower limbs. Fruit that has spotting as a result of herbicide spray drift cannot be packed as fresh fruit.

Days to Harvest

Most pesticides (fungicides, insecticide and herbicides) have days to harvest intervals. That is, they can be applied within so many days of harvest. These intervals can vary from one day to as many as 80 or more days depending upon the product and crop it is being applied to. With the start of the harvesting season growers should always check the pre-harvest spray interval for any pesticide being applied. Failure to do so could result in the application of a product that has a longer pre-harvest interval than the actual harvest date, which would mean that the fruit could not be sold. If you were to apply Zolone at this time of year to apples you could not harvest the fruit for 30 days. This would not present a problem if it was applied to Northern Spy, which will not be picked for another 40 plus days, however, in the case of McIntosh you would not be able to harvest them until the 1st of October which would be a problem for the producer. The increased emphasis on food safety means that all producers should be aware of the pre-harvest interval for the pesticide being applied.

Soil Fumigation

Growers that will be fumigating an old orchard site to reduce replant for next spring planting should have the soil worked to seed bed condition prior to fumigation. A poorly prepared site could result in the fumigant being ineffective. This means that there should not be large clumps of soil or vegetative matter that will hinder the sealing of the soil surface. Preferably fumigation strips should also be deep rip to bring up roots or stones that may damage the fumigator.

Written and published by AgraPoint in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Industry representation.