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# ORCHARD

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# NOTES



November/December 1998

## CLING PEACH BREAKFAST MEETING

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1998  
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

El Zarape Restaurant, 1085 Gray Ave., Yuba City

Hosted by the California Cling Peach Growers Advisory Board, Co-sponsors are the California Canning Peach Association (CCPA) and University of California Cooperative Extension, Sutter and Yuba Counties.

This will be a meeting you will not want to miss. There will be an informal discussion on past season pest problems and issues, the dormant spray, alternatives and best management practices for spraying. All peach growers, pest control advisors and peach industry people are invited to attend.

**PCAs note:** 1.5 hours of PCA continuing education is pending.

**Reservations are needed to attend. Please RSVP by December 9, 1998 to Heidi Sanders at the CCPA office, 673-8526.** There will be another breakfast meeting to discuss pest and disease control in the early spring.

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### CHILLING HOURS

Daily chilling accumulation from all the statewide Cimis weather stations can be accessed from the UC Davis Center for Fruits and Nuts web site at <http://www.fruitsandnuts.ucdavis.edu>.

This service was funded by several tree crop commodity boards. Our Sutter County Cimis station is located in Nicolaus. As of November 12<sup>th</sup>, 61 chilling hours had accumulated there compared to 65 chilling hours as of November 13<sup>th</sup> in Yuba City at our office.

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## PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

Every grower in Sutter and Yuba Counties should have received a registration form for private applicator training being held December 2<sup>nd</sup> , 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> , 1998 at our office on Garden Highway. The five hour training on December 2<sup>nd</sup> (in English) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (in Punjabi) allows you to avoid the private applicator exam. The two hour training on December 4<sup>th</sup> prepares you to take the exam which immediately follows the training. Please contact our office if you need a registration form.

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### Why Complying with Pesticide Safety Requirements is Important to You

*Adapted from an article written by Rick Landon, Sutter County Assistant Agricultural Commissioner*

There are several compelling reasons for growers and their employees to follow pesticide worker safety rules and label requirements:

- **Growers jeopardize product registrations or could lose their independent ability to apply specific pesticides when they or their workers don't wear the personal protection equipment required by the label.** Pesticide labels always require personal protective equipment, such as eyewear, special clothing, chemical resistant gloves, even respirators for some products. The purpose is to mitigate hazards to workers. If workers don't wear the gear, the hazard is not mitigated and the result could be label cancellation or revision to allow application only by professional applicators who generally do wear the proper equipment.
- **Employers whose workers don't wear the safety equipment may be held liable in a civil case if a worker is injured.** The injured employee has to show that the employer failed to comply with worker safety requirements, such as providing pesticide safety training. But, high judgement costs and increased insurance premiums are a possible result.
- **Growers who violate worker safety requirements are subject to civil penalties.** Fines range from \$151 to \$400 per violation, and if there is injury the fines range from \$401 to \$1000 per violation.

The Agricultural Commissioner's Office in Sutter County is beginning a program to increase grower compliance with pesticide labels and worker safety regulations.

- The Agricultural Commissioner's staff is available to attend meetings to discuss this issue. Call Rick Landon at 822-7500 if you would like him to come to your meeting.
  - Pesticide safety workshops in December will provide continuing education training and preparation to take the private applicator exam.
  - The Agricultural Commissioner's office will be making an appointment with each grower to do an inspection of an application. These will be educational and will not result in civil penalties if violations are found. The goal is to help growers improve their compliance, not to penalize them.
  - The inspection staff will increase their focus on growers.
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## METHYL BROMIDE UPDATE

The January 1, 2001 ban on U.S. methyl bromide use has been extended to January 1, 2005. This new phase out schedule requires a 25% reduction January 1, 1999, another 25% cut on January 1, 2001, and a final 20% reduction on January 1, 2003 before the total phase out by January 2005. Although this is a positive step, the mandated reductions could limit the amount of methyl bromide available for soil fumigations. Over the next year, seriously consider removing and replanting marginal orchard blocks while methyl bromide is still available.

## PEACH NOTES

### *Disease Control*

Shothole - To protect against twig infections, apply protective fungicides at leaf fall. This late fall spray will also give some protection against peach leaf curl.

Brown Rot - A combination program of mummy removal and fungicide sprays at bloom gives the best possible control for brown rot. Removing fruit mummies helps reduce the amount of brown rot inoculum in an orchard by interrupting its life cycle. At pruning, remove mummies and prune out infected twigs and destroy in a burn pile. Any mummies remaining on the ground should be buried by cultivating before bloom.

Rust - Rust was seen in every variety this season with some orchards having very high incidences. The environmental conditions were ideal for disease development. High fungicide rates and full coverage sprays timed at frequent intervals were needed this last season to control rust. Our research results will be discussed at our winter peach meetings.

### *Insect Control*

Oriental Fruit Moth (OFM) - There was high pressure from OFM in the late summer.

Because of lower temperature thresholds for this pest, the population was building during the cooler spring. Then, with hot temperatures starting in July, the later generations progressed rapidly.

The Dormant Spray and Alternatives - The traditional dormant spray is an oil spray, mixed with an insecticide targeting peach twig borer, San Jose scale and mites. In addition to controlling several pests, it is less disruptive than in season sprays to beneficial insects that are in a winter resting state. With the problems of insecticides in the watershed and other potential pesticide restrictions, it is important to practice best management practices when spraying. Also, become familiar with the alternative to the dormant spray which is using oil at dormant timing for young scale and mite control and bloom time sprays of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) for peach twig borer control. Dormant sprays and alternatives will be discussed at the upcoming breakfast meeting.

## WALNUT NOTES

Pruning - Pruning mature trees after harvest while the leaves are still on makes it much easier to see and remove deadwood and limbs infected with branch wilt fungus. Pruners can also manipulate light penetration within and around the canopy to maintain fruitwood. Young walnuts (1-3 years old) which are more sensitive to winter kill should not be pruned until the delayed dormant period (late February-March).

Walnut Husk Fly - Husk fly came on with a vengeance in the late summer and required multiple sprays in some orchards using the egg detection method for spray timing. Although still months away from worrying about husk fly control, winter is a good time to review the husk fly video on biology and spray timing if you had a problem this past season. It can be checked out from our office.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

Tri-County Peach Meeting - will be the second or third week of January, 1999.

Sutter/Yuba/Colusa Walnut Meeting - will be the third or fourth week of February, 1999.

## **FARM SERVICE AGENCY ANNOUNCES EMERGENCY LOANS AVAILABLE TO HELP FARMERS WHO SUFFERED DAMAGE FROM LAST WINTER'S STORMS**

Farmers in 53 California counties are now eligible to apply for FSA Emergency Loans if they suffered physical or production losses from last winter's storms. Emergency loans can be made to producers whose losses occurred between February 2 and July 29, 1998. Emergency Loan applications may be submitted now through June 1, 1999. There are estimates of more than \$505 million in lost revenue to the state's agricultural industry.

To be eligible, farmers and ranchers must have suffered a loss of at least 30 percent in an individual crop which constitutes an essential part of the farming operation. These loans are made to family-sized farming operations and the interest rate will be 3.75 percent.

For more information on eligibility, farmers can contact the Farm Service Agency Office in Yuba City at (530) 671-0850.

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## **THE TAXPAYER RELIEF ACT OF 1997 HELPS FARMERS**

*By Steve Sutter, UC Area Farm Advisor, Fresno County*

The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 lowers Federal income tax for most farmers, and allows farm families to transfer farms across generations more easily, according to USDA agricultural economists, James Monke and Ron Durst. Most provisions of the new law become effective in 1998. An estimated 6% of farm estates currently owe Federal estate and gift taxes compared with just over 1% of all estates. The Act gradually increases the unified estate and gift tax credit to shield \$1 million from estate taxes by 2006. However, due to the relatively slow phase-in through 2003, most of the benefits will be realized in 2004 and beyond. This, and other provisions of the Act should reduce, if not eliminate, the need to sell farm assets to pay Federal estate taxes, especially for continuing businesses. Lower capital gains tax rates provide the greatest income tax savings for farmers – nearly \$725 million of the estimated \$1.6 billion annual savings for the U.S. farming industry.

The rate declines from 28% to 20% for individuals in most tax brackets (from 15% to 10% for taxpayers in the 15% bracket), with lower rates available in the future for assets held at least 5 years.

Couples can exclude to \$500,000 of the gain on the sale of their principal residence. This new exclusion can be used as frequently as every 2 years. The new law also expands retirement savings incentives. Currently, only about 9% of farmers annually contribute to an individual retirement account (IRA). Although the 1997 Act creates a new, nondeductible "Roth IRA," deductible IRAs are usually preferred if marginal tax rates are expected to fall substantially in retirement. Farmers who pay their own health insurance premiums will benefit from expanded self-employed health insurance deductions. This year, farmers and other self-employed taxpayers are allowed a deduction of 45% of health insurance premiums; the percentage deduction gradually increases to 100% by tax year 2007 and thereafter.

The Act restores farmers' ability to use deferred payment contracts without being subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax (A.M.T.). Deferred payment contracts allow farmers to deliver farm commodities for sale at a specified price, with payment deferred until the following year. The Act also repeals the A.M.T. for small corporations (most farm corporations) beginning in 1998.

The Act increases tax benefits for most taxpayers for having dependent children by providing a \$500 (\$400 for 1998) tax credit for each qualifying child, under the age of 17. An additional refundable credit is allowed for taxpayers with three or more children. The new child tax credit is expected to benefit about one-third of all farmers and their families.

Farmers and their advisors should request the free IRS Publication 225, "Farmer's Tax Guide", each year in December. It can be obtained by calling 1-800-829-3676.

### **Cultivating Personnel**

Labor management in Ag: Cultivating Personnel Productivity covers conflict management, employee selection, performance appraisal, incentive pay, interpersonal relations, employee discipline and more. The University has tried to keep the cost down so as to make the book available to as many people as possible. There is an electronic version that can be viewed on-line, on the World Wide Web, and can be constantly updated. Now, the University has taken one more step to make this tool more useful by making it possible for you to download the book with the latest updates onto your hard drive or floppy disk. You can then view it on your Web browser whether you are working off or on line. It may be downloaded at: <http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ucce50/7book.htm>.

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## **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

*Available from our office*

Cling Peach Cost Study - This 1998 study was just released and can be purchased for \$2.00.

### **Natural Enemies Handbook**

The UC Statewide IPM project has produced this 164-page book, which draws on the experience of more than 60 experts from UC and beyond. The nine chapters cover the biology of hundreds of predators, parasitoids,

and pathogens that attack pest insects, mites, plant pathogens, nematodes and weeds. There are over 180 color photographs and 140 line drawings to help readers find, identify, and use natural enemies to control pests in agricultural crops, gardens or landscapes. The cost is \$35.00 plus tax.

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

I would like to thank all of you who supported our office this past year, especially research cooperators and those who hosted meetings. Your time, efforts and monetary support are all appreciated.

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
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