

season update

This publication has been facilitated by HAL in partnership with Australian Citrus Growers (ACG) and has been funded by the national citrus R&D levy. The Australian Government provides matched funding for all HAL's R&D activities.

QUEENSLAND – APRIL 2006 REPORT

Harvest is now well under way and includes imperials, grapefruit, navels (and navelinas) as well as lemons. **Fruit size** is an issue. The lack of rain and, in many cases, inadequate thinning (given the seasonal conditions) has contributed to overall poor size development.

The new **quality standards** for harvest as set by Queensland Citrus Growers are generally being adhered to and this is being reflected in overall good quality fruit in the market. Growers are encouraged to obtain a copy of the voluntary standards and to adhere by them to ensure that only fruit of a high standard is sent to the marketplace. A special emphasis is being placed on the need to ensure that second grade fruit standards do not drop. An excess of sub-standard second grade fruit will have a profound effect on returns for all lines.

Red scale is mostly under control but there remain a few odd blocks with unacceptably high levels. Aphytis parasitism is now at high levels except in these troublesome blocks.

Jassid populations have been noticeably low this season most likely as a result of the lack of flush in the dry conditions. Some blocks have required treatment but few follow-up applications have been necessary.

This season remains noteworthy for the low levels of both **rust mite** species. **Oriental spider mite** populations are now settling down following the worst season ever for this pest in the Central Burnett district.

Fruit fly pressure is still high although control has been generally good. Fruit fly baiting at regular intervals will need to be maintained while the weather remains warm and fruit continue to ripen. The use of thickeners to enhance bait performance is recommended while fly pressure remains high.

Emperor brown spot (EBS) has been at low levels but counts are just starting to rise in some orchards. As dew levels increase with cooler weather EBS levels typically rise. Protectant fungicides are recommended especially in blocks with a history of EBS infection.

Black spot continues to show up in monitoring records. This season is proving to be a difficult one for this disease. A meeting was held recently to discuss these issues with research staff involved in the Citrus Black Spot project. It is believed that most infection occurred during a period of wet weather in October and November and is related to issues of timing and interval between the application of protectant fungicides. Subsequent hot and dry conditions have placed individual blocks under high stress leading to accelerated expression of black spot symptoms.

Source: Dan Papacek, Bugs for Bugs