

# 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 – AUGUST 2006 REPORT

**Harvest** is winding up with some orchards already finished for the season. Overall the quality of fruit has been good with better returns than for many years. Wind blemish has also been less of a problem compared with recent years.

The main issues during the season have been high levels of **creasing** in some varieties and small sizes. Fruit size however was better than expected considering the difficult growing conditions. A much improved export market including demand for smaller sized fruit helped offset the size issue.

All growers face uncertainty in the coming season due to the ongoing drought. With only 127mm of rain thus far, this year has been the driest to date since records were first kept in 1912.

**Fruit fly** activity has generally been very low in spite of the warm weather and mature fruit still hanging in orchards. This is the third season that fruit fly has been under such good control at this stage of the season and is evidence of the value of the Fruit Fly Area Wide Management program.

Growers are reminded that it is imperative they continue baiting to ensure that fruit fly numbers do not increase. All blocks with fruit still hanging should continue to receive weekly bait treatments. Other blocks should at least receive some bait treatment albeit at a reduced level. This is especially warranted in blocks where residual fruit is still hanging. Any build up in fruit fly numbers at this time of year will lead to higher potential populations in the next growing season.

The next round of MATs (orange colour) are due to be placed out now.

**Thrips** continue to cause damage in out of season lemons.

An early **flowering** is evident in many blocks and copper sprays will be required from 75% petal fall. It is common practice to include zinc with copper sprays at the rate of 100gm (zinc sulphate heptahydrate) per 100L of spray mixture. Where high volume spray machines are used a single application of zinc is usually sufficient. In the case of low volume sprays, two or three applications of zinc may be required.

Applications of boron are also usually warranted in citrus in Queensland. However the difference between levels of boron that constitute deficiency or toxicity are small and growers should be cautious with boron applications.

Generally an application of boron every second year should be sufficient. It is best not to mix boron with zinc sulphate or with sprays containing mineral oils.

Sprays containing chlorpyrifos (such as Lorsban) should be avoided before and during flowering as ridging of the fruit can be induced as a result.

Growers are encouraged to **prune** citrus as soon as practicable after harvest. This will improve coverage of fungicides, remove dead wood, enhance airflow and improve tree health. All of these factors will improve management of difficult diseases such as black spot and melanose.

*Source: Dan Papacek, Bugs for Bugs*