

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 – SEPTEMBER 2006 REPORT

Petal fall is well under way. At the time of writing this, petal fall is around 70-80% in the Gayndah area and 40% in Mundubbera. In most cases where a **split copper** is recommended the first application should already have been applied. The second application should be made approximately 2-3 weeks later at 90-100% petal fall. All other blocks should receive a single application of copper fungicide at between 75% to 100% petal fall. If extended rainfall is predicted during this period then growers should apply their copper sprays earlier rather than later. Copper is considered important for the first fungicide as it is the only material that offers protection against melanose.

Zinc is usually applied with the copper fungicide. Where growers are using hydraulic oscillating boom sprayers a single application at 100g/100L should be sufficient. Air blast sprayers applying lower volumes per hectare may require a double application of zinc.

Boron supplements may also be required. Soil and leaf analyses should be used to decide on the boron requirement. An excess of boron can be toxic to citrus. Many growers apply boron every second year. Boron should not be mixed with zinc sulphate sprays.

Growers should also look closely at **calcium** nutrition. This year saw the highest levels of creasing for many years. Calcium and boron nutrition are both implicated in the incidence of creasing.

The daily mean minimum temperature is rising steadily. **Fruit fly** baits must be stringently applied to any blocks where late fruit or second crop/unharvested fruit are hanging. This is imperative to ensure the continued success of the Area Wide Management program. It is recommended that bait sprays also be applied to the entire orchard perimeter and even to blocks where there is no evidence of hanging fruit (although at a lower rate here).

Thrips have already been recorded in lemon blocks. The pressure from thrips has been increasing over recent seasons. Growers are encouraged to apply a thick layer of mulch under citrus trees to improve the habitat for predators of thrips. Thrips drop to the soil to pupate and are most vulnerable at this stage.

Aphids are active at present. Good levels of beneficials have been observed including ladybirds, hover flies, parasites and lacewings. It is rarely necessary to control aphid populations when beneficials are present.

Water quality and availability remains serious throughout the district.

Source: Dan Papacek, *Bugs for Bugs*