

Thinners Subject Of Biglerville Fruit School

BIGLERVILLE (Adams Co.) — Growers know that flower bud formation is vital to getting good fruit set. Obtaining that fruit set and managing fruit throughout the cycle is critical to obtaining improved fruit production.

Those were some of the messages that more than 110 orchard growers and consultants heard last week at the 1996 Penn State-sponsored Fruit School at the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Biglerville.

Duane W. Greene, department of plant and soil sciences at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, spoke about the factors that influence flower bud formation. How that fruit will set and develop is a combination of "grower management decisions," Greene indicated.

Examples of activities that discourage flower bud formation include excess nitrogen, severe pruning, selection of a vigorous rootstock, or a gibberellin treatment. Activities that encourage flowering include branch bending, ringing and scoring, selection of dwarfing rootstock, or application of ethephon.

Greene examined other factors

and described the interaction of tree age, cell division and bud development, light and energy, leaves, tree vigor, crop loads, and flowering promoters (use of thinners and cytokinins).

Ross E. Byers, professor of horticulture at the Virginia Polytechnic Ag Research and Extension Center, spoke about the use of thinning sprays to obtain good fruit set. The risks of blossom thinning were explored by Charlie Embree, Ag Canada Research Centre, Kentville, Nova Scotia. George Greene, Fruit Research and Extension Center, Biglerville, spoke about parts per million (a concentration, not a quantity), dilute versus concentrate, and tree row volume in plant growth regulator applications.

The use of blossom thinning technology was a critical component of the daylong school.

Since the loss of the use of Alar and 2,4,5-TP for fruit drop control, the use of NAA was increased. "We were left with NAA as our only and weakest stop drop control product to fill the gaps," according to Dick Unrath, North Carolina State University, Asheville, N.C.

One such drop control, AVG



At the Penn State Fruit School last week, speakers included, from left, Steve Miller, Charles Embree, Duane Greene, Dick Unrath, George Greene, and Ross Byers.

(yet to be given a trade name), shows promise and requires a specific surfactant (silicon) for best effect in apples, according to Unrath. The drop control chemical

delays maturity and controls drop. It blocks ethylene production, which causes fruit ripening. But other normal maturity factors are generally altered, such as delayed

red color development, higher starch levels, reduced soluble solids content, and a delay in fruit softening.

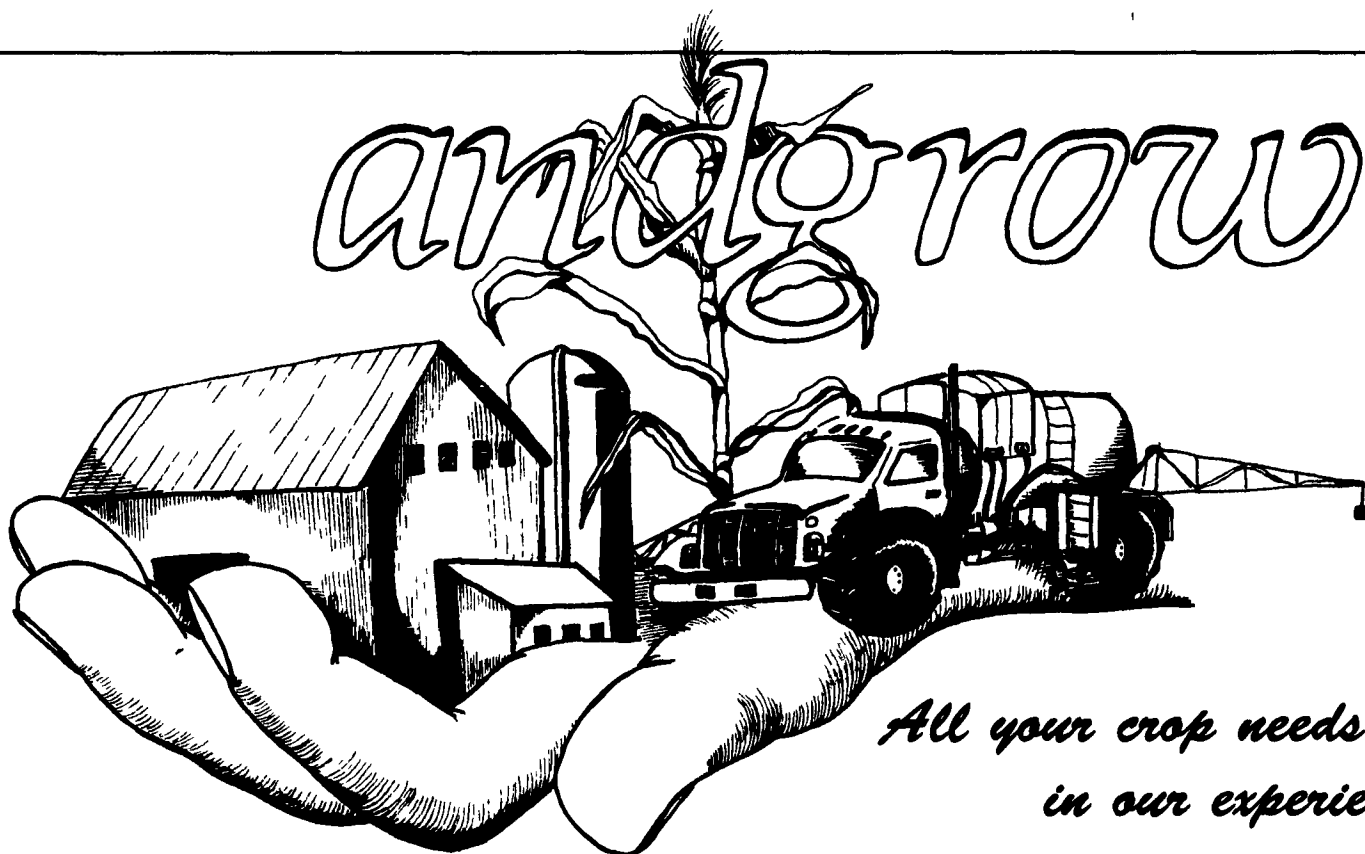
Fruit treated with AVG (four weeks before harvest) should be evaluated separately for fruit maturity and color grading with the expectation of delaying harvest.

Effective use of NAA, elgetol, endotal, ethephon, Accel, Sevin, and Vydate as thinners were examined. Also, tree and fruit growth regulators were part of the daylong conference. There was also a small group discussion to examine the use of thinners and growth controls.

Top Pennsylvania DHIA Herds By County For February

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PINE TON FARMS	160	1	20006	735	3.7	639	3.2	POLLY HOLLOW FM INC	114.2	19594	691	3.5	628	3.2
JARRO LINDELL	71	0	19521	698	3.6	622	3.2	WINDSOR DAIRY FARM	54.6	19875	683	3.4	614	3.1
GLA DON FARMS	51.8	19513	695	3.6	614	3.1	BEDWASKI FARMS	74.0	19594	714	3.6	609	3.1	
DOUG+DIANE HASTINGS	43	8	19461	732	3.8	612	3.1	JOHN & J B MARCHEZAK	78.8	19418	733	3.8	608	3.1
MARK LANSOW	50	2	18806	608	3.2	604	3.2	GAPEN BROS.	112.4	18607	742	4.0	588	3.2
RAN-DELL FARM	57	3	18853	686	3.6	588	3.1	W REX & CAROL SMITH	50.9	17859	670	3.8	586	3.3
			WASHINGTON					MILLERVILLE FARM	60.0	18708	704	3.8	583	3.1
HAMILTON BROS	205	2	22185	768	3.5	698	3.1	BETTY POLKY	37.3	17821	699	3.9	576	3.2
WRAVERTOWN FARMS	94.0	21099	767	3.6	676	3.2	MARION PYLE STONE	35.6	18668	665	3.6	568	3.0	
CO-HILL FARMS	74	9	20166	738	3.7	659	3.3	HILLCREST DAIRY FARM	46.1	18332	635	3.5	565	3.1
OBRIEN FARM	36	8	20835	709	3.4	648	3.1	RUSH BROTHERS	120.2	17141	713	4.2	556	3.2



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