

Plum Pox

(Continued from Page A1)

terial. Penn State, along with the state and federal departments of agriculture, has been looking closely at how the virus spreads. Nov. 4 was the last observation of active virus made.

In a survey conducted in Adams County, of 39 samples, 18 were positive in two townships — Latimore and Huntington, near York Springs. A quarantine was established extended to a two-mile radius around the infected zone.

Fortunately, the Strain D virus found tends, noted Hulbrendt, to spread slower with fewer severe symptoms compared with other strains, and does not affect cherry trees.

PPV is spread from aphids, who inject the virus into plants while feeding. They do not pass the PPV onto the progeny.

The quarantine does not extend to the movement of fruit. But no plant material is allowed to leave the quarantined site.

According to an article in the Lancaster Intelligencer Journal, this spring, "front teams" organized by Penn State and the other departments of agriculture will visit tree farms and nurseries to collect information to help

stop the virus.

Teams will take leaf samples from trees to be used to test for plum pox. Symptoms don't appear on the trees for two to three years, according to Hulbrendt. That's why testing now is necessary.

Since the outbreak was discovered, 31 states that have received fruit from Pennsylvania requested test kits.

The virus has no ill effects on humans. But the virus leaves lesions on the fruit, making them hard to market.

Adams County is the center of the fruit-growing region in the state. Pennsylvania produces more than \$25 million worth of stone fruit each year.

With increasing environmental regulations, growers have been steadily losing selection of materials to fight fruit tree fungus. But some new, potent weapons are undergoing approval or already have been approved for use in orchards.

Travis, Penn State pathologist, spoke about the new "stroby" fungicides available. Strobry, short for Strobilurin, is an antifungal compound originally discovered in a fungus.

The material was discovered in Europe by someone observing pine cones infected with a fungus. The cone was not rott-

ing. Apparently, a substance in the fungus prevented other fungi from developing on the cone.

The stroby fungicides are manufactured by a variety of companies. The fungicides are broad-spectrum, rain-fast, provide systemic activity, and are effective against rusts, scab, and powdery mildew. The only concern Travis and other researchers have is resistance management. Travis said that if the stroby fungicides are overused, "you'll lose them fairly quickly."

There are no phytotoxicity problems.

The key is to apply the fungicides early enough and to carefully watch label rate application.

"If you use them well in your orchard, you'll be able to use them for a long time," Travis said. He also provided information on peach fungicide programs.

Steve Miller, of the Appalachian Fruit Research Station, spoke about the new plant growth regulator (PGR) that may soon be available to growers. The material, with the scientific name prohexadione calcium, inhibits gibberellic acid biosynthesis, "which causes cell elongation," noted Miller.

In other words, the material reduces plant vegetative growth, promoting more fruit development on the plant.

Critical to growers, Miller said, is timing. Timing "is extremely important if you are going to reap the benefits of the material."

Growers must apply the PGR early in the season, at petal fall to 3-inch height, for effective growth control. The material shortens the length of time required to prune trees, reduces the number of primary cuts, and reduces tree canopy, which helps in improving fruit size and quality.

There are also disease benefits using the PGR, according to Miller. Research has noted that the material controls fire blight by reducing the shoot growth, thus reducing the number of fire blight strikes and length of strikes, consistently.

Using the new PGR, there is no reduction in fruit size, fruit firmness, or solids. There are no adverse effects on fruit quality

and no carryover even at higher rates. However, the PGR can increase fruit set, requiring an aggressive thinning program, Miller said.

The PGR may be available to growers as early as April this year.

Also at the meeting, Greg Krawczyk, Penn State entomologist, provided details on studies on oriental fruit moth control. He also provided information on managing aphids in fruit trees.

With the use of more selective chemicals for growers, scouting, timing, and application take a greater emphasis, according to the Penn State entomologist.

Tim Elkner, Lancaster horticulture agent, provided information on fine-tuning sprayers. He noted that, according to the New Jersey fruit production guide, 20 percent of seasonal costs are involved in spraying. Proper calibration not only helps get the proper rates of sprays to plants but can "also save you money," he said.

Photoperiod Meeting Set

NEW FRANKLIN (Franklin Co.) - A meeting to discuss photoperiod management is scheduled for March 2, 2000 at the New Franklin Ruritan Community Center. Time is from 9:45 a.m. to noon. Dr. Geoffrey Dahl, University of Maryland and Dan McFarland, PSU ag engineer will be the featured speakers.

Growing evidence supports the use of photoperiod as a management tool for dairy producers. Photoperiod is the cycle of light and dark periods within a day. Recent research has shown that long days stimulate increased milk production by 6-10 percent in lactating dairy cows.

Pre-registration is not required. However, there will be a five-dollar per person (farm) charge at the meeting to help cover the expenses for getting Dr. Dahl into the county. Multiple people from the same farm do not pay more than the one five-dollar registration.

Directions. From I-81 exit 5, follow route 316 SE for two miles to New Franklin. At Arthur's Country Deli, turn left onto New Franklin Road. Proceed for the equivalent of one block. Look for the Ruritan Community Center sign and driveway on your right. The meeting will take place in the block building.



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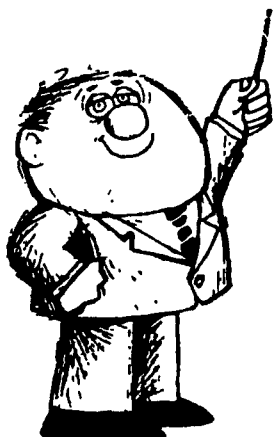
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