MAGAREY PLANT PATHOLOGY

Western Electronic Design

GrowCare Clare

Clare Region Winegrape Growers Association

Brought to you by your local Regional association

This message was posted on **Tuesday 12th November 2013**.

2013/14 Volume 4 Issue 3

Season Progress

- Many blocks are now at or in the process of flowering in what has mostly been a reasonably good growing season (that is, where the frosts didn't cause damage!).
- Flowering is a time of transition for the vines and for us. For the vines, after fruit set the food 'sink', where most of the vine's nutrients are directed, changes from the shoot growing tips to the developing berries. This slows the growth of the canopies and fosters the development of the fruit load. After set, the berries become resistant to diseases like powdery mildew (3-4 weeks after flowering – near EL 31) and downy mildew (at EL 31 pea-size).
- For us, flowering is a transition time for withholding periods. From EL 25 (80% capfall), a number of products are no-longer accepted by wineries. These include some DMIs and some strobilurins (eg azoxystrobin), and spiroxamine, chlorothalonil, pyrimethanil, Teldor® and Switch® - for bunch rot and/or powdery and/or downy mildew. Other products are limited after EL 29 and 31 when berries are 4mm or pea-size respectively). If in doubt about which products are available check with your winery rep before spraying, or with the Dog Book at: www.awri.com.au/industry_support/viticulture/agrochemicals/app/

Downy Mildew

- The light rainfalls that were recorded across the Clare Valley region were generally useful to assist in a small increase in soil moisture. Falls of 4.2 mm occurred at Stanley Flat and of 6.5mm at Auburn.
- Earlier in the season (18th September), some reasonable falls of rain led to a low risk of downy mildew primary infection in the Valley. In most vineyards the period of rainfall was too short to induce the disease. While this was true for most, there was a slight risk that downy infection occurred somewhere in the district where, for example, there may have been more rainfall.
- If this were so, where vines were unprotected, it is possible that one or two oilspots may have developed every 50m or so along the vine row. These would have been hard to find. If they were present, the rainfall of 7-8th November was at risk of triggering a light secondary infection from such oilspots, if the vines were unprotected in the 7-10 days prior to the 7th November.
- If infection did occur in the recent rains, a few oilspots might be expected to show up in the vicinity of 18th November. When monitoring for powdery mildew in the next two weeks, it might pay to keep an eye open for downy oilspots too.
- By that time, berries in many vineyards are likely to be approaching some level of resistance to downy so future risk of crop loss this season is low.

Powdery Mildew

- The control of powdery mildew on the fruit is at a critical stage. As the canopy develops the capacity to achieve good spray coverage decreases. Also, the humidity inside more dense and shaded canopies will increase making the conditions more favourable for powdery mildew.
- Now is a good time to monitor closely for powdery to ensure you have effective control of the disease before the canopy closes over more fully.
- Despite the withholding periods, there is still a useful array of products suitable for powdery mildew control. Some growers like to consider a multi-purpose fungicide such as Cabrio® (permitted until berries are pea-size) because of its dual activity against downy and powdery mildew.
- In selecting the best spray to use it is good to check costs of the product against alternatives such as a simple tank mix of two products (eg of copper and sulphur).

Supplementary Irrigation

- Given the relatively small rainfall across the district last week and the rate of growth in many canopies in the recent week or two, it is timely to review soil moisture profiles in your vineyard. As indicated above, canopy growth is likely to give way to the expansion of newly set berries in the next few weeks and it is important to ensure the canopy is best equipped to supply needful moisture to the flowers and developing fruitlets.
- The relatively cool season to-date is quite capable of turning hot as we approach December. Assess the development of the canopies in your various vineyard blocks and consider a supplementary irrigation to ensure the development of an optimum-sized canopy well supplied with reserves of water to allow fruit set and crop development unhindered.

Petiole Sampling

- At and near flowering is a good time to check on the nutrient status of your vines.
- As indicated in the previous GrowCare message, it is worth considering petiole samples at this time to ensure your best monitoring of the nutritional state of your vines. This ensures best possibility for the development of your vines and of your crop at vintage.

This message was prepared for
The Clare Region Winegrape Growers Association by
Magarey Plant Pathology and Western Electronic Design.
