

PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

FRUIT EDITION \$1.50

OCTOBER 3, 2006



Peach Media Day with the New Jersey Restaurant Association, New Jersey Department of Agriculture, Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the New Jersey Peach Promotion Council, on July 20, 2006, at Wightman's Farm in Morris County.

Peach Marketing Season 2006

Jerome L. Frecon, Agricultural Agent

Movement

2006 seemed to be a good marketing season in New Jersey according to reports received from many grower/shippers. Wholesale movement was good and better than 2005 according to Weekly USDA Market News Commodity Shipment Reports for Peaches and Nectarines. As of September 26, 2006 where every state has finished shipping except California, USDA movement for US shippers is 55,804 - 10,000 lb carlot units compared to 59,730 - 10,000 lb. carlot units for the same week in 2005. This represents a decline of about 6.6% in 2006. However, when tracking New Jersey wholesale peach shipments, movement was up 20% over 2005. In 2006 New Jersey shipped 3,540 -10,000 lb. carlot units compared to 2,871 units in 2005. Other states reporting more shipments of peaches in wholesale quantities in 2006 with percentage increases were: Georgia 4.6%; Idaho 38%; Michigan 38%; and South Carolina 3.9%. Those showing a decline were: Appalachian District down 4%; Washington down 11%. California is also down when comparing the same date in 2005. They shipped 36,062 - 10,000 lb. carlot units in 2006 compared to 40,512 lb. carlot units in 2005. This represents a decline of about 11%. However, we know California has been harvesting and shipping up to 2 weeks late all season and they may still have enough peaches to meet the 2005 level.

2006 was the first year in the past 5 when there was a good breakdown in nectarine shipments. California ships 98% of all nectarines in the US. However, as of September 24, 2006 only 33,859 -10,000 lb. carlot units of US nectarines have been shipped. As you can see this represents 40% less than our peach crop in 2006. California has also shipped 13.3% less nectarines in 2006 in comparison to the same date in 2005. Again they may not be finished shipping as fruit harvest and shipments were running about 2 weeks behind. New Jersey shipped 199 - 10,000 lb. carlot units compared to 0 in 2005. The Appalachian District shipped 172 - 10,000 units in 2006 compared to 133 in 2005. The only other area that reported nectarine shipments was Idaho with 35 units.

This was the first year the FOB reporting of peaches and nectarines was consolidated in one office in Baltimore for both the Bridgeton, N.J. report and the Appalachian District, Martinsburg, WV report. It is possible that shippers from New Jersey did a better job reporting ship-

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ments or reporters for Market News did a better job collecting. Looking purely at the statistics as of this date even though we shipped less peaches in the US, New Jersey was getting a higher percentage of the available wholesale movement of peaches.

The NJASS estimates that New Jersey would harvest or utilize about 70 million pounds of peaches (includes nectarines). According to the USDA Market News Reports 36.5 million pounds are shipped wholesale. Thus, we are moving another 33.5 million pounds in other channels or they are not being reported as wholesale shipments. These could be sold for processing (peach juice), retail directly to consumers, or sold in 25 pound units or as commercial grade to specialty markets. It has never been quite clear where these peaches go.

Prices

In talking to many growers and shippers, it appears that peach prices were significantly better in 2006. This does not mean profits were significantly higher on fruit farms. Costs are almost suffocating. Energy costs were significantly more (transportation, refrigeration, fuel for irrigation pumps and equipment), and all the products made from petroleum were higher – packages, fertilizers some pesticides etc. The base labor rate per hour was at least a \$1.00 higher per hour and since October 1 has increased another \$1.00 per hour. The costs of overhead and regulation continue to climb. Growers continue to operate with limited control over costs. The secret is continued efficiency, and greater yields of quality fruit.

Promotion

The New Jersey Peach Promotion Council exerted lots of time and energy, and I think it made a difference. Under the direction of Promotions Chair, the NJPPC placed timely ads in major newspapers in the state. More importantly a Peach Media Days was held before the Peach Festival and at least 12 articles were written and published in major newspapers and on two New Jersey Network News broadcasts. This was tremendous exposure for the peach industry in New Jersey and the metropolitan New York and Philadelphia areas with a low expenditure. Additionally, the NJDA put a strong effort into promoting the crop through the Jersey Fresh program. Another great improvement, which was hard to measure, was the redesign and improvement of the NJPPC website at www.jerseypeaches.com. Lastly, not only does the Wholesale Buyers guide help but it also raises money that helps the promotion. More promotion would help tremendously but the current effort is well focused to help the industry. □

Vintage Update

Mark L. Chien, Wine Grape Agent, Penn State University Cooperative Extension

Source: *Electronic Newsletter Wine Grape Information for Pennsylvania and the Region, October 2, 2006*

This season feels distinctly like Oregon with very unpredictable weather. We just can't seem to catch a streak of sun and dry. I was out in the vineyard last week and here are a few observations.... it's important for grape growers not to think that you are the only one being affected by the plague no matter what form it appears to be. In this case, **powdery mildew, botrytis, ripe rot, birds** or whatever is going on out there I assure you.... YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!! Granted, disease control varies according to site and grower skill but everyone is in the same fight. It is easy to feel isolated in your vineyard oasis, especially at crunch time. I suggest you take a break and visit your neighbor.

Chardonnay appears to be consistently a problem variety this season with powdery mildew and bunch rots taking down fruit. I have heard of similar chard troubles from other regions. I think we need to consider this problem as an industry this winter and figure out what went wrong and how to fix it. Yes, the world has too much Chardonnay but no individual vineyard wants to lose too much.

Where I saw improvement in Chardonnay conditions were in vineyards with exceptional canopy management. Okay, here is where the broken record starts - as Dr. Travis said so succinctly - spray programs are a supplement to good canopy management practices. I think we all know that but so many things get in the way of execution from labor and cash shortages to ill-timed vacations. We also learned at the walk around that spray programs - timing, rates, coverage, material choice, etc. are all incredibly important to successful disease management in a year like this one. It just is.

Ernesto was bad but Florence was the real disappointment to me. What was advertised as a brief passing storm stood still over Lancaster for 36 hrs and dumped warm, steady tropical rain. We have had some gorgeous sunny, dry and breezy days but not enough. It is amazing how quickly these conditions can arrest the development of rots. Sun is the silver bullet. But we haven't had quite enough of it. Again, canopy and fruit zone open.

As the days cool down temperature around the fruit becomes more critical (see Enology Notes #118, just out) and exposing berries to sunlight warms them dramatically. They need every ray of sun and associated heat to push enzyme activity needed to develop critical secondary metabolites responsible for color and phenolics, especially in red varieties (in Oregon, in a year like this, the fruit zone gets stripped of leaves late). This helps with disease control as well.

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Final Apple Maturity Update for 2006

Win Cowgill, Agricultural Agent

We continue to have a perfect fall season for maturing and coloring apples in North Jersey. Cool -nights in the 40's and 50's continue to color fruit. We have 3 warm sunny days this week forecasted with today's high predicted at 80°F. Fruit is maturing with good sugars and excellent eating quality.

Harvesting at the correct maturity. Picked too soon green apples will be starchy and not have developed the full flavor components, or the best sugar/acid balance. For retail sales most cultivars should be 5-6 on the starch chart and at least 13% Brix (sugar). For short-term storage of 1-2 month's 4-6 on the SI chart.

We picked Macouns Oct 2 at the Snyder Farm which finally had developed good sugar and good flavor.

Macoun

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Macoun	Snyder	10/1	no	16.2	11.6	5.8
Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Macoun	Hackettstown	10/1	yes	15.8	12.8	4.3

Empire-Has been harvested throughout central NJ and is close in Warren County. We would look for starch of 5-6, brix of 13-14%, pressure 16 lbs.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Empire	Snyder	10.1	yes	19.1	12.2	5
Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Empire	Hackettstown	10.1	yes	17.4	11	4.3

Red Delicious- Have matured early for some growers but not all. Central Jersey growers have harvested theirs. Sugars have been slow to develop in reds, and most are still very starchy. Reds picked immature continue to convince the consumer that they taste like napkins.

Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Red Chief	Hackettstown	10.1	yes	18.5	10.8	2.2

Golden Delicious- is matured a bit earlier in Hunterdon and Morris and has been harvested. Warren Co. is ready.

Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Gold Del.	Hackettstown	10.1	yes	17.6	12.6	4.3

Liberty- a very high quality scab immune cultivar, was harvested 10/1 with excellent sugar. Liberty always develops better flavor after it has been in storage for a few weeks and mellows.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Liberty	Snyder	10	yes	16.1	13.4	6

Crispen (Mutsu) widely planted in western NY as a high quality eating apple, large size and green color with a pink/yellow blush on the cheek are characteristics of this cultivar.

Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Crispen	Blairstown	9/24	no	17.5	11.4	2.8

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Crispen	Snyder	10.2	no	19.7	14	3.75

Morris	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Crispen	Harding Twp	10/2	yes	16.5	11.6	4.1

Northern Spy- was harvested at Snyder on 10/1

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New Web-Based Marketing Tool for NJ Farmers

Karyn Malinowski, Ph.D., Associate Director of NJAES and Director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension

I am pleased to inform you about a new opportunity that exists for farmers statewide. Through a cooperative effort between Rutgers Cooperative Extension, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the Food Policy Institute a new web-based marketing tool for farmers to promote farm visits has been developed. The website, www.visitnjfarms.org, will provide farmers the ability to post information about your farms and events being held at your farms in real-time, while providing consumers the ability to search for farm operations based on location and the activities and products they offer. This website will be the first of its kind in the nation and will provide New Jersey farmers a unique opportunity to attract visitors to your farms.

Letters have been sent from the Department of Agriculture to farmers who have already expressed interest in participating in the website to help them get their farm operation information entered. If you've received the letter, please enter your information on the website in a timely manner and we encourage any other farmers that have a desire to invite the public onto your farm to register. We are planning on introducing the website to the public around the end of the month and would like to have a strong base of farms participating for the release. Please feel free to explore the website using the password "njfarm" and to forward any questions or comments to Lucas Marxen at the Food Policy Institute at 732-932-1966 x3114 or marxen@aesop.rutgers.edu. □

Grapes are ripening at lower sugars this season, typical for cool and rainy vintages. Don't expect 24 brix in any of the reds. But flavors are good and sugar can always be adjusted. Watch the flavors most intently, they are your guide this year. The trick is to balance flavor development with level of disease. At some point you either lose the ability to make a good wine from diseased grapes or you have lost so much fruit it kills the economics of making wine. This is a delicate balance and only you can decide where the balance point on the fulcrum lies. Fortunately, we have some tough varieties as the mainstays of our industry including Chambourcin and Vidal. They both looked pretty good on the vines but Chambourcin, in particular, has a long way to go.

I was mostly getting sugars from 17-19. Crop thinning, early, was a definite benefit this year. Crop thinning now - unripe berries, will still yield benefits to wines - as will sorting grapes. Sort however, whenever and wherever - in the field and on the crush pad. Sorting will likely define this vintage. Those who do, have a chance at pretty nice wines. Those who don't, well, talk to any wine grower in Burgundy or Bordeaux - our closest climate cousins, for the answer. Do what you can.

Birds. Don't just look at them. Chase them! As I approached one vineyard I heard the birds from a half mile away. There must be a strategy to deal with them. Why work for 7-8 months and let it all go away in the week before harvest?

We need Indian summer now. I couldn't help but note the irony of the lead article in the recent Wine Spectator about the effects of global warming on viticulture. It's the topic du jour. Well, it's not here yet so we have to deal with the traditional challenges.

Submitted by Jerome L. Frecon, Agricultural Agent. ☐

Ambrosia - Ambrosia is a chance seedling found in southern British Columbia. Its probable parents are Golden Delicious and Starking Delicious. Fruit size is medium, with an attractive red blush and faint stripes on a cream or yellow background. Excellent for fresh salads as the flesh is slow to oxidize (brown). It was tested in our NE183 apple trial at the Rutgers Snyder Farm. It has a highly attractive pink/red color and good eating quality. The variety has been now been sold and is only available as Club variety and may not be available to growers on the east coast for planting.

We harvested Ambrosia on 10/2 at the Rutgers Snyder Farm with an equivalent yield of 1000 bushel boxes per acre.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Ambrosia	Snyder	10/2	no	18	14	6.4

Cameo - is a newer high quality eating apple that is being widely planted in the northeast. It is probably chance seedling of red delicious but has excellent flavor like the red delicious of old.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Cameo	Snyder	10/1		19.7	13.6	3.8

Warren	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Cameo	Hackettstown	10/1	yes	15.5	11.4	5.2

Morris	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Cameo	Harding Twp.	10/2	yes	15.7	13.2	4.3

Fuji - is now the second most planted apple in NJ. Maturity is moving along nicely.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Fuji cv Sun	Snyder	10.1	no	19	13.6	4.5

Stayman - one of our mainstays of fall apple production in Northwest NJ. It will not be ready for harvest at least a week.

Bill Tietjen reports some premature fruit drop on Stayman in one block. Many blocks of fruit were drought stressed in August with 3.5 weeks of no rainfall. At this point only NAA is available as a stop drop at 10-20 ppm. Remember it takes 2-3 days to work once applied.

Hunterdon	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Stayman	Snyder	10/2	yes	25	13.8	2.5

Morris	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Stayman	Harding Twp	10/2	yes	17	11.4	2.2

Suncrisp (NJ55) One of the highest quality eating apples we have in the mid October Season. All growers in the retail/pyo trade should have some of this apple planted. One block tested was very high in sugar but with a very green background. Suncrisp needs to start turning creamy to taste its best. It must be harvested 2-3 times to catch early maturing fruit. It is also best grown using Retain to even out maturity.

Morris	Location	Date	Retain	Firmness	Brix	Starch
Suncrisp	Myersville	10/2	no	17.2	13.8	4

What the numbers mean

Several growers have asked for a bit of information on what the numbers mean in our brix and starch iodine tests. The SI is a measure of how much starch has converted to sugar. The lower the number the more "immature" the fruit is. The higher the number the more "mature" the fruit is. We like to have an SI of between 5-6 to harvest for retail sales. Brix is a measure of sugar content of fruit. A brix of at least 12 percent should be present for acceptable eating quality. Fruit firmness is also an excellent indicator of maturity and the "crunch factor". For most

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Regional New Grape Grower Workshop

Dr. Tony Wolf (Virginia Tech), Mark Chien (Penn State), and Drs. Anne DeMarsay and Joe Fiola (University of Maryland) are offering a one-day regional New Grower Workshop for beginner and prospective grape growers in Maryland. This course offers a broad overview of commercial vineyard development from pre-plant planning into the third year including economics and marketing information, variety, clone, and rootstock choices, site selection and preparation, pre-plant decisions, equipment and supply requirements. We will also cover the basics of ordering, planting, and tending the vines through the third year of growth, as well as best practices for training, canopy management, and pest management. This seminar is a good overview of what is involved with getting a commercial vineyard started in the Mid-Atlantic region.

When: Thursday, October 12, 2006

Place: Western Maryland Research and Education Center (WMREC) in Keedysville, Maryland. WMREC is located in Washington County, easily accessible from the surrounding states

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (please arrive at 8:00 a.m. – coffee & donuts available)

Cost: \$ 135 for non-residents of Maryland. (This includes lunch, breaks, handouts, and other program costs.)

Pre-registration is required and registration is limited to first 60 persons. The deadline for registration is October 9. Late registration or at the door fee is \$160, if space allows.

Cancellation policy: Registration cancellations received by October 9, 2006 will be fully refunded. *No REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN OCTOBER 10, 2006 OR AFTER.*

Local accommodations:

Sleep Inn & Suites, 18216 Colonel H. K. Douglas Dr., Hagerstown, MD 21740

Location: Intersection of I-70 (exit 29) and south on Rt. 65 (three miles east of I-81). The Hotel is behind the Cracker Barrel restaurant. Ten to fifteen minutes from WMREC.

Local attractions (Prime Outlets, Downtown Hagerstown, Antietam Battlefield), other tourist information, and additional accommodations available at: <http://www.marylandmemories.org/home.html>.

For more information, please contact:

Pam Thomas or Cindy Mason

301-432-2767 ext. 301 or 315

Fax 301-432-4089

pthomas@umd.edu or cmason@umd.edu

or

Joe Fiola

301-432-2767 ext. 344

jfiola@umd.edu



Ambrosia apple at the Rutgers Snyder Farm, September 27, 2006. Planted in a super slender spindle production system, this apple produced 1000 bushel boxes per acre in 2006 at a spacing of 2.5 feet x 10 feet.. Photo Credit Win Cowgill

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varieties I would like to see firmness of at least 16 lbs at harvest. The exception is Honeycrisp. It has excellent crunch at 13-14 lbs fruit firmness. Studies have shown that it has double the number of cells that give it its unique crunchy texture.

Note: This report takes approximately two days to prepare in collecting and testing samples and in preparation of the text and data. A note of thanks to all who make this report possible beginning with all the growers who participate, Martha Maletta, Research Assistant, RCRE of Hunterdon Co. and Rob Sanchis Research Assistant at the Rutgers Snyder Farm. Thank you to Ed Dager, for the Snyder Farm support and Geff Slifer, Plant and Soil Science Technician for assistance with all aspects of fruit production at Snyder. Most importantly thank you to the growers for allowing me to sample their blocks.

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NJ AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS
COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION
Plant & Pest Advisory
Rutgers' Cook College
18 College Farm Road
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901-8551



PLANT & PEST ADVISORY

FRUIT EDITION - CONTRIBUTORS

RCRE Specialists and Program Associate

George Hamilton, Ph.D., Pest Management
Norman Lalancette, Ph.D., Plant Pathology
Bradley A. Majek, Ph.D., Weed Science
Peter Oudemans, Ph.D., Small Fruit Plant Pathology
Cesar Rodriguez-Saona, Ph.D., Cranberry/Blueberry Entomology
Peter W. Shearer, Ph.D., Entomology
Daniel Ward, Ph.D., Pomology
Gail Lokaj, Program Associate in Pomology

NJAES/Cook College

Joseph Goffreda, Ph.D., Breeding

RCRE Agricultural Agents and Program Associates

Atlantic County, Gary C. Pavlis, Ph.D. (609-625-0056)
Gloucester County, Jerome L. Frecon (856-307-6450)
Hunterdon County, Winfred P. Cowgill, Jr. (908-788-1338)
Morris County, Peter J. Nitzsche (973-285-8300)
Passaic, Elaine F. Barbour, Agric. Assistant (973-305-5740)
Warren County, William H. Tietjen (908-475-6505)
Fruit IPM, Dean Polk (609-758-7311)
Atanas Atanassov, Ph.D., Program Associate (908-788-1338)
Gene Rizio, Program Associate (856-566-2900)
David Schmitt, Program Associate (856-307-6450)

Newsletter Production

Jack Rabin, Associate Director for Farm Services, NJAES
Cindy Rovins, Agricultural Communications Editor

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