



# GrowCare Barossa



Brought to you by the Barossa Grape & Wine Association

This message was posted by 1.30pm on Thursday 8 January 2015 and will be updated as necessary for best management of vineyard issues.

2014/15 V2 # 5

## Forecast Rain

- A significant period of rain is forecast by the Bureau of Met. It is due to begin from early morning Thursday 8 January but heavier falls are expected on Friday and Saturday 9-10 Jan.
- The weather should clear from Sunday 11 and Monday 12 January.
- Predicted thunderstorm activity usually brings variable falls, with maximum totals across the Barossa expected to range from around 10mm upward to 40-50mm in that period.
- The Bureau is predicting rains on Friday of up to 10mm and Saturday up to 20mm with reasonable periods of leaf wetness and high humidity mainly on those days.

## Key Matters in relation to Disease

- It is not how much rain but how long will the foliage remain wet?
- How warm and how humid is the air during and immediately following the rain event?
- How tight are the bunches?
- Thinness of berry skins?
- How ripe are the berries – that is how much sugar in the berries to provide food supply for the bunch rotting fungi such as Botrytis?
- Is there a history of disease such as bunch rots and downy mildew in your patch? and
- How long until your grapes are picked?

## Some Good News

- While most varieties are approaching veraison (softening/colour change) they are yet to 'sugar up' – some may have begun to soften but are still not very sweet! This means that they are not highly susceptible to bunch rot fungi at present (though they will be in several weeks).
- Grape berries are resistant to downy mildew infection once they are bigger than pea-size, although the bunch stems are still susceptible.
- The season has in the main been dry and good for keeping the 'wet weather diseases' like bunch rots and downy at minimum levels. To date there are few spores of the bunch rot fungi in the vineyard canopy.
- Most vineyards will have few if any active downy oilspots and, in most patches, it will take at least two or three cycles of this disease to build up and spread sufficient spores to cause concern.

## The Balance for Bunch Rots

- Tight-bunched, thin-skinned varieties with sugared berries in shaded canopies are at some risk of bunch rot infection in the forecast rain event. If concerned with a history of bunch rot in your patch, consider a spray such as iprodione or captan before the rain, or alternatively, as soon as possible after.
- But, for vines less at risk, an application of iprodione or captan after the rain event might be considered if long periods of humidity above 80% occur at temperatures above 20°C.

## The Balance for Downy Mildew

- Most patches are not very susceptible to downy mildew at present. Later-harvested varieties are more at risk if the wet weather persists allowing downy to escalate before harvest.
- Growers with susceptible patches or with a history of downy, may wish to apply a preventive spray (eg copper or mancozeb) if possible before Friday's rain, or perhaps preferably, do nothing now, wait until after the rain event and then consider applying either a post-infection product such as metalaxyl immediately following the rain or a protectant as close as possible before a following suitable rain event (if any).

## Powdery Mildew

- Some Barossa growers have reported cases of powdery mildew in recent days. Look carefully inside canopies to check for this disease.
- Powdery is best controlled by high volume applications. Be sure to equilibrate spray volume to canopy size. Use the recommended rate of product per 100m of vine row and apply between 20 – 30 L spray mix/100m of vine row.
- If using sulphur, maximise control by applying at 600gm/100L dilute volume (or equivalent) and spray again within 7-10 days.

## If Spraying

- As always, check with your winery first. The array of products to control bunch rots and downy mildew is now quite limited.

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*This message has been prepared by the Barossa Grape & Wine Association in partnership with Magarey Plant Pathology and Western Electronic Design. You will be updated as soon as possible after the next significant vineyard event.*  
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