GrowCare Clare

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and will be updated when new vineyard management issues arise.

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Welcome to *GrowCare e-news for Clare 2016/17*

Your Clare Region Wine Grapegrowers Association (CRWGA) will again be providing you with this newsletter email service (e-news) for this the seventh season. This e-news service will advise you of:
1). the risk of disease throughout the season especially when disease risk is high;
2). the best management options for the foliage diseases (and pests) such as downy and powdery mildew and bunch rots; and
3). When relevant, we will include other vineyard issues and regional news.

Another season is underway and this means that diseases like powdery mildew are also underway... and given the rains yesterday and overnight, it raises the possibility of downy mildew infection too.

Rains yesterday

The Bureau of Met accurately forecast a high probability of in recent days... and rain it did.

Most of the region received good falls in the vicinity of 17-20mm over a period that was reasonably short. For downy mildew primary infection the soil needs to be wet for at least 16hours, then more rain is required while the temperature needs to remain above 8°C.

Many vineyards would have achieved falls of the right timing and temperature that was likely to have fulfilled the conditions for primary infection BUT....

Many varieties are still to burst or have only just begun. Varieties in this category include Grenache, Riesling and Shiraz. In the main, these varieties are likely to have had insufficient new foliage to be concerned about downy mildew. This is also likely to hold true for the more advanced variety Chardonnay. This has about 4-5 leaves showing in the more advanced vineyards.

Given the conditions, there is a low risk of downy mildew primary infection in the more advanced vineyards. However, it is not recommended that a post-infection spray be applied at this stage.

However, there are further rains forecast for next Wednesday and Thursday. Given this, we will advise of the risk of downy in this event as it draws closer.

Powdery Mildew

Where new shoot growth is appearing, remember:

- **early-season sprays are critical**.
- 'flag shoots' which emerge with powdery mildew already on the leaves, are now releasing spores and spreading the disease in your vineyard.
- Late winter rains will have triggered the overwintering spore-bodies (formerly called cleistothecia, now chasmothecia) to have discharged their spores before budburst – so these will be of little or no importance as a source of powdery this season.

Managing powdery mildew

- The level of control you achieved last season will have a big bearing on how much inoculum (spores) you will have in your vine block this season in the form of flag shoots.
- In the same way, the more effectively you control powdery in the next 4 – 6 weeks will have a big effect on how much powdery you will have at harvest **and** how much inoculum you will carry-over into next spring?
- The better the spray coverage and timing now, the fewer sprays you will need this season and the fewer early next season too.

The ***Three T's*** of effective spraying:

- Timing, Treatment and Technique.

Timing

Begin spraying for powdery mildew when shoots reach 3-5cm length (EL 7-9).
Note:

- the first 40 days from budburst is critical;
- apply sprays 2, 4 and 6 weeks after budburst;
- or, at least, three sprays before flowering.

Treatment

- All fungicides registered for powdery mildew are effective but sulphur (at 600g/100L) applied just after budburst, is a low-cost option that will also help control mites.

Technique

- To ensure good spray coverage, use high water volume, check the configuration and calibration of

your spray machinery and, as appropriate, adjust the spray swath to fit the size of the canopy at the time of spraying.

For more information about controlling powdery mildew and the concepts of 'epi-season', 'inheritance/legacy' and 'lag phase spraying', a fact sheet is available at: http://www.gwrdc.com.au/webdata/resources/files/PowderyMildewFactShee.pdf

Snails and Earwigs

The late-winter rains have encouraged snails and earwigs which can damage young vines and growing shoot-tips. When monitoring for these pests, especially earwigs during the day, be sure to check inside vine guards, under loose bark and under debris on the vineyard floor. Alternatively, at night, use a torch to look for them on shoot tips where they are easily seen. If **snails** are a problem, use metaldehyde or a registered snail bait sprinkled at the base of vines as soon as possible after rain or irrigation.

Control of **earwigs** is usually not required because the damage is usually not economically significant and earwigs, as 'good guys', help reduce the number of soft-bodied insect pests such as light brown apple moth larvae, mealy-bugs and mites.

Bud Mites

For maximum control, ensure sprays of sulphur are applied prior to mid-woolly bud stage and up to four weeks later.

Avoid spray drift

To avoid misuse of chemicals, please ensure the weather conditions and wind direction all meet PIRSA guidelines to prevent spray drift: (see http://www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/rural_chemicals/chemical_use_best_practice).

Soil Moisture Levels

- This season, late-winter rains have provided a valuable reservoir of soil moisture at depth. The rains forecast for this week should ensure this lasts for a while longer yet!

Reducing the Risk of Frost

The high soil moisture levels will help retain vineyard heat on a frosty night.

Things to do to reduce the risk of frost include:

- mow or roll ground-covers as low as possible;
- maintain vine health. If needed, fertilise the vines to assist their growth.
- if needed, maintain soil moisture levels and if practical, irrigate during high risk frost periods.

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This message was prepared for
The Clare Region Grape Growers Association by
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