

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

26 September 2008

AUSTRALIA'S climate is changing, but there is already a technology available to help support growers and minimize the potential negative impacts.

The latest prediction from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is for an average global temperature rise of 1.1 to 6.4°C by the end of this century. A marked increase in the frequency of hot days, warm nights and a reduced frequency of frosts is predicted. Solar radiation may increase by 10% across the southeast and southwest corners of Australia by 2070.

A change in the amount, distribution and intensity of rainfall – combined with increased evapotranspiration – means the chance of 40% more droughts in Eastern Australia and up to 80% more droughts in the Southwest by 2070.

Parasol sunscreen, distributed in Australia by Crop Care, represents new technology from Purfresh in America. It is one product that growers are already using to manage tree-fruit crops in the warmer conditions that now prevail in America and Australia. A liquid formulation of calcium carbonate it forms a thin, reflective film on produce and the leaf canopy – reducing the impact and damage from sun exposure.

Parasol has already been used successfully on apples in Victoria and on mangoes in Queensland.

Shaun Heidrich - Australia/New Zealand regional manager for agricultural sunscreen products for Crop Care, in conjunction with US manufacturer Purfresh says growers are already keenly interested.

“Most crops suffer some form of solar stress, and growers are facing limited or reduced water allocations. Shielding plants and produce from the sun's heat also has the potential to reduce water loss and improve the efficiency of water use – as well as protecting fruit quality.

“Apple growers in Victoria estimate that sun damage can cause them to lose up to 30% of their crop. Use of the liquid sunscreen Parasol assists to minimize loss”.

In the US, Parasol is being successfully used on cherries to prevent pitting, fruit softening and stem browning.

In South Australia and the USA trials are underway post-harvest to test the potential of Parasol to protect the next cherry crop from sun-induced bud splitting.

Parasol:

- Coats fruit and foliage with an even film to provide protection from the sun.
- Washes off easily after harvest.
- Protects from harmful Ultra Violet and Infra Red damage, but allows natural fruit coloring & photosynthesis to continue.
- Is easy to mix & spray – a liquid formulation that can be applied with standard air-blast sprayers and compatible with most fungicides and insecticides.
- Can be applied successfully by aircraft.

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Parasol is available for use in Australia to protect both the fruit and foliage of agricultural crops including apples, pears, stone fruit, citrus, tree nuts, olives, grapes, avocados, bananas, mangoes, lychees, guavas, pawpaws, pineapples, vegetables – including capsicums, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, cucurbits, and lettuce, seedlings, ornamental and nursery plants, cotton and peanuts.



CHERRIES treated with sunscreen Parasol in the US - to help prevent pitting, fruit softening and stem browning.

More information:

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UNTREATED Sun-Damaged Pear

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