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Crop Conditions

Grape harvest is nearly complete with only the late ripening varieties yet to be picked. Quality and yield have been very good in most areas. We are getting near the end of apple harvest across the state. Red Delicious are pretty much finished with Golden Delicious harvest currently underway. Although we started the season 10-14 days ahead of normal, things have evened out and we are now only slightly ahead of a normal. Fruit size has generally been good this year and there are some excellent Golden Delicious crops around the state. The recent dry conditions have helped fruit crops slow their growth and harden off for winter. However, drought stress could be a problem for berry crops that are in the process of differentiating flower buds. Continue to irrigate blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries if rainfall is limited.

Weather Notes: September, 1998 will go down in the record books as the 6th driest and the 6th warmest on record. September was very dry statewide with the northern 1/3 of the state a little wetter than the rest of the state. Particularly the area north of a line from Gary to Marion to Winchester, that area received 2-3 inches of rain during September. The rest of the state received less than 1 inch of rain with some areas reporting rainfall in September of less than 1/10th of an inch. Temperatures continued the August trend of above normal with the state averaging temperatures around 4 degrees above normal. A slight increase in rainfall events recently are a hopeful sign that some much needed precipitation will be received around the state.

The short range outlook for Oct. 8-12 calls for above normal temperature and precipitation. The medium range forecast for October, and the long range forecast for Oct.-Dec. both call for normal temperature and precipitation. -*adapted from Ken Scheeringa's comments at the Purdue Crop and Weather Meeting, Oct. 2, 1998.*



Cider Warning Labels: Yes I'm still harping on about this! You all know that unless you are pasteurizing, then you must have warning labels either on

the jug or a placard on the cabinet from where the cider is sold. The same rules apply whether the cider is sold by the producer from a farm market or through a supermarket. If you are selling through a supermarket, both the supermarket and the cider producer are responsible for correct labeling, therefore it is a good idea to make sure that the appropriate placards are in place. I mention this because I was in a supermarket recently and was checking out the cider which wasn't pasteurized but I couldn't see a warning label or placard. I eventually found a placard with the warning statement hidden behind another sign. Obviously, the regulatory agencies would take a dim view of this, and the cider producer as well as the supermarket is potentially liable. So since we have to display these warnings, let's put them where people can easily see them and be up front about the issue. Also, you may want to add a statement inviting people to ask questions if they have concerns about the safety of your cider. That will give you, the cider producer, the opportunity to inform your customers about the steps you take with sanitation, washing, brushing, etc. to reduce the potential risk as much as possible. If customers have concerns about feeding the cider to children, advise them to boil the cider first – the cider needs to be brought just to a boil and then cooled again as rapidly as possible.



Cold, Wet Winter Possible for Region:

Despite the long range forecast above, weather forecasters are calling for a La Nina winter. According to Ken Scheeringa, acting state climatologist at Purdue, and Tom Priddy, University of Kentucky Extension agricultural climatologist, El Nino events (warming of the Pacific ocean) are typically followed by La Nina events (cooling of the Pacific). According to Priddy, La Nina weather patterns typically bring mild, dry conditions to the southern third of the U.S. and cold, wet conditions for the northern third of the U.S. Indiana can expect cold, wet conditions for November, December and part of January. Temperatures should reverse by February, though, to mild conditions for the remainder of the winter.

According to Scheeringa, "In the summer of 1958 we had an El Nino event, which was followed by a La Nina later that year. That November we had a record low in Indiana of 12 degrees below zero." According to the official climatologist report for January 1959, "The month will be remembered for its numerous snow and ice storms. Losses totaled several million dollars. On Jan. 4 winds and moisture from Lake Michigan were such as to cause drifts up to four feet in height in the Michigan City area. In southern Indiana, three to six inches of rain on frozen soil flooded lowlands and places seldom exposed to high water." Scheeringa said that 1983 was another El Nino-La Nina transition year. On Christmas Day in 1983 everybody in Indiana was snowed in. Traveling was strongly discouraged due to severe wind chill factors and iced-over highways.

Priddy adds that besides rough weather, another characteristic of La Ninas is the fluctuating temperatures. That means cold blasts from the Arctic as well as mild periods interspersed. Eds. note: Fruit growers know that harsh winter weather and fluctuating temperatures can mean disaster. Let's hope the forecasters are wrong.



Mulching Strawberries: If you haven't already done so you should make arrangements for your mulch supply now. Strawberries are typically mulched with clean wheat straw; clean meaning that it does not contain excessive weed or wheat seeds. Any straw is suitable as long as it is heavy enough to resist blowing off in the wind and free of troublesome weeds. A good rule of thumb is that it takes 1.5 to 2 tons of straw per acre of strawberries.

Mulch should be applied AFTER several hard freezes in the high 20s have occurred over a short period of time (a week or two). This usually occurs in mid to late December. Once these freezes occur strawberry plants will be completely dormant. It is important not to mulch too early because the plants need the exposure to cold and shortening daylength to properly harden off for winter. On the other hand you want the mulch on before sub-zero temperatures occur. That usually means sometime in late December.



Fall Chores: Fall is a good time for taking care of those problems you noticed all summer and said you were going to do something about. In the last issue we

discussed soil management and cover crops, control of perennial weeds, and herbicide applications. This is a great time to get those things done. If you are planning a new planting for next season, take advantage of the dry soil conditions and subsoil the site as deeply as possible. Adjust the soil pH with lime, make fertilizer additions (especially P and K) and incorporate those materials as deeply as possible. Disk the area and get a cover crop established before the end of October to assure adequate soil coverage and reduced erosion potential. Take care of those other odds and ends; the broken trellis posts, leaking irrigation system, and so on. And don't forget to winterize your sprayers and irrigation equipment.



TAP Now Available for the Nation's Fruit Growers:

Tree fruit and grape growers who have suffered losses during the 1998 fiscal year (ending Oct. 1) should contact their local Farm Service Agency county office immediately. Losses include damage to actual trees or vines, not fruit. Public Law 105-174 has appropriated \$14 million for Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to provide assistance to eligible owners to replace or rehabilitate eligible trees and vines damaged by natural disasters.

To qualify for payments, eligible owners must: 1) Have owned the eligible trees or vines when the natural disaster occurred 2) Be in compliance with Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions 3) Suffer eligible tree or vine damage from a natural disaster occurring in FY 1998 4) Not as a person have a gross revenue exceeding \$2.5 million for the 1997 tax year 5) Suffer qualifying tree or vine losses of 20 percent or greater for the individual stand, adjusted for normal mortality 6) Replace or rehabilitate eligible trees or vines within 12 months from the date the application is approved. Source: Ohio FSA. - from *Ohio Fruit ICM News Volume 2, Issue 27, September 9, 1998.*



Winegrape Production in the Midwest II, Advanced Topics in Production of Premium Winegrapes:

Throughout the United States consumption of premium wines is increasing. The wine producing states of the Midwest are experiencing increased sales of premium wines produced from regionally-grown grapes, creating a strong demand for locally produced, premium winegrapes. To help growers meet this demand, specialists with the Heartland Grape and Wine Coalition (Michigan State University, Ohio State University, and Purdue University) are offering an advanced course in winegrape production, emphasizing production practices for

optimum winegrape quality.

This conference will be the third in a series of conferences developed by the Heartland Grape and Wine Coalition. The 2-day conference will be held in Indianapolis January 25-26, 1999 at the Adam's Mark Hotel.

The conference will bring together a wealth of technical knowledge and practical experience for those who are either experienced or beginner viticulturist in the Midwest. The conference will not only expose participants to a series of presentations covering important topics in viticulture, but also provide an opportunity for informal discussion and exchange of ideas with others involved in premium winegrape production in the Midwest. Participants will also have the opportunity to sample Midwest commercial and experimental wines. The conference will be held in conjunction with the Indiana Horticultural Congress, so participants will have the opportunity to attend educational programs in other areas of horticulture and take advantage of a large trade show immediately following the grape conference.

We hope this conference will be even more successful than our previous programs and invite all those interested to join us for this event. For more information contact : Dr. Bruce Bordelon, 1165 Horticulture, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1165 Phone: 765-494-8212 Fax: 765-494-0391 email: bordelon@hort.purdue.edu



Beekeeping and Honeybee Pollination Conference: The Indiana Beekeepers Association and Purdue Department of

Entomology will hold the Beekeeping and Honeybee Pollination Conference on the Purdue West Lafayette campus Friday-Saturday Oct. 16-17. The program will begin at 2:00 p.m. Friday with a tour of the Purdue Apiary, followed by a presentation by Susan Cobey, Ohio State University at 7:00 p.m. Saturday's program will begin at 8:00 a.m. in Krannert G16. The program includes speakers from Purdue, commercial beekeepers, and growers. A highlight of the program will be the auction of an original drawing of "Garfield" by Indiana's Jim Davis. For more information contact Dr. Greg Hunt 765-494-4605 or Dave Laney 219-656-8701.

SUGGESTIONS

Program Ideas for the Winter Meetings: Thanks to those folks that have sent in their ideas for topics to be covered at this years Indiana Horticultural Congress. We could still use some more ideas, so let us know as soon as possible. Please send Peter Hirst, Bruce Bordelon, and/or Dick Hayden your suggestions for topics or speakers. The dates of the meetings are January 25-27, 1999 so mark your calendar.



Subscribing Electronically: To subscribe (or unsubscribe) to Facts for Fancy Fruit, send a message to fff@lists.hort.purdue.edu with the subject or body "subscribe" (or "unsubscribe"). You can also use the form at the web site <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/fff/maillinglist.html> to submit your subscription. Electronic access is free of charge.

Coming Meetings:

- Oct. 16-17** - Beekeeping and Honeybee Pollination Conference. Purdue University campus. Contact Dave Laney 219-656-8701 or Greg Hunt, 765-494-4605.
- Oct. 21** - Apple variety showcase and tour will be held at Hilltop Nursery, Hartford, Michigan. The tour begins at 5 PM followed by a buffet dinner and variety showcase at 6:30 PM. Contact Mark Longstroth at 616-657-7745 or Hilltop Nursery at 800-253-2911
- Dec. 1** - Illinois-Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, Holiday Inn - Moline Airport. For more information, contact Bill Whiteside 630/584-6166
- Jan. 25-27** - Indiana Horticultural Congress, New Crops for the Heartland VI, Heartland Grape School II contact Purdue Department of Horticulture for more information.

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