Good for Farmer Footsteps

The best fertiliser is the Farmer's footsteps. March is a good month to do and plan all those things you will forget during the hurly burly of pre-harvest and harvest work.

Sward management

Had a good look at your "grass" sward lately. Grasses are the most efficient plants at transferring carbohydrate and nutrients to lower levels in the soil. Over 20 years they can make a big difference to the organic matter and aeration of soils. Should you be sowing a hybrid ryegrass this month?

Fruit Size & estimation

We all have accurate records of our mid bloom and fruit set dates, don't we? No, then DIARY A NOTE NOW FOR OCTOBER & NOVEMBER. Size calculation charts are getting more accurate by the year, but are useless if you only guess flowering times. I do size by walking with eyes down and pick 100 fruit by feel across a block. Weigh all these fruit and predict sizes from tables available from your packhouse. Check possible reject levels at the same time. Estimation is easy after this. I like the method of counting all fruit on every 10th cane down whole rows. Do enough rows to ensure all variation of crop loads are covered. This is superior to whole bay counting. Allow sensible reject level, say 17% and divide by average size. You need to know the accurate number of similar type bays or vines over the orchard. Go for a walk, ponder and ask the question: Is my estimate sensible?

Odd Jobs that get missed

White grafting tape strangling newly grafted vines. Wires ready to poke someone's eye out, weeds growing among fruit, broken structures, big holes for picking trailers to bump along, etc. Fix these pronto.