

AROUND THE NELSON REGION...

SPRING IS HERE, TIME FOR FROST PROTECTION.

Kiwifruit buds are starting to move which is about normal for this time of year. Budbreak is measured when 50% of the buds have shot and it is a good idea to record budbreak in each of your kiwifruit blocks as this information is required later in the season.

A photo record is also useful for reviewing from one year to another. Once budbreak is underway as per this photo, frost protection should also be up and running. Budbreak usually in Nelson on Gold3 is around the 10th -13th of September and the 20th for Hayward.

In my opinion buds are susceptible to frost damage even before this stage (figure 1) if the frost is heavy enough. Also don't forget about protecting any new planted and grafted young plants as these are more susceptible because the buds/shoots are closer to the ground where its colder.

Hail and frost insurance for kiwifruit is relatively cheap and worth looking into, especially since the weather extremes are getting more frequent.



Figure 1: Budbreak

Steve

AROUND THE HAWKE'S BAY REGION...

NITROGEN IS CRITICAL FOR FRUITSET

Although spring is running late, we need to think about pre-bloom foliar urea sprays now. Over the years we have found a strong relationship between poor fruitset and low spring nitrogen levels.

Nitrogen requirement for fruitset, spur leaf growth and the initial spring growth flush come from stored nitrogen reserves accumulated in the last growing season. Where these stored nitrogen levels are low, there may not be adequate levels for good fruitset.

Applying a couple of low biurette urea foliar sprays between open cluster and early bloom will reduce the

risk of poor fruitset due to low nitrogen levels.

John

YOU DON'T IMPROVE WHAT YOU DO NOT VALUE.

In my travels around the world I have noticed that regions that are good at things are generally that way as they have been forced to focus in that area.

- Apple growers with fixed land area such as South Tyrol tend to have business focussed around production per ha.
- Water efficiency can be learnt from those living with limited supply such as Australia, Israel, South Africa and parts of the USA.
- Labour efficiency and understanding for improvement is very common in parts of Europe and the USA
- Netting for management of Birds, Bats, Hail, Sunburn... from Australia and other countries.

For the last 20 years I think New Zealand had 3 things I think we were world class at.

- How to extract the highest recovery / yield of class 1 fruit off the orchard area
- How to get the best return for dollar invested on the orchard
- How to find access to market opportunities

We need to find ways to improve, and still focus on where we have had success in the past?

Ask ourselves - What is next for New Zealand growers to focus on?

- Quality – matched to consumer wants / perceptions – no surprises
- Variability – focus on outliers, not averages – reduce the waste, embrace excellence.
- Environment – Community acceptance, market expectations, resource limitations.
- People – Manage greater expectations with less people and less skilled people.
- Money – Doesn't stay cheap forever – Bankers blight destroys businesses.

To be the best we cannot accept the Status Quo, the rest of the world is improving quickly.



Figure 3:
Royal Gala harvest China – Stem clipped into a good picking bucket, aluminium ladder, cloth over top for hail and sunburn.

What are we doing better than this, that adds value to us or the consumer?

Jonathan

SOIL MOISTURE STATUS

This is the soil moisture of a galaxy block in silty soil near the Ngaruroro River.

2016/17 sat mostly at full point (Blue line) below 500mm while the top fluctuated between quite dry and full point. The block's fruit quality result was very good.

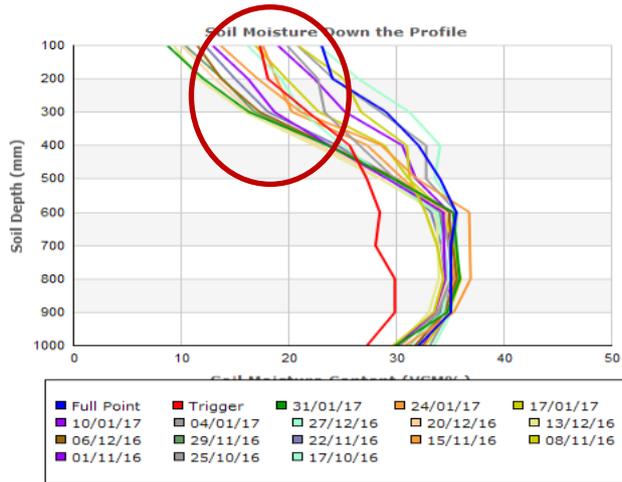


Figure 4: 2016/17 Galaxy soil moisture content.

2017/18 has less drying in the top, and more of the season above field capacity (between Red and Blue lines). This season had large fruit size.

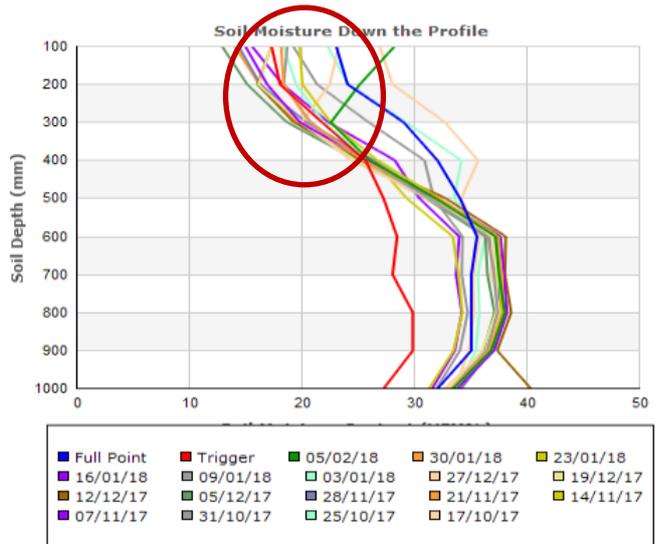


Figure 5: 2017/18 Galaxy soil moisture content.

2018/19 had saturated soils below 500mm (right of Blue line) and the top did not have much moisture stress (stayed between Red and Blue). More moisture stress (left of Red line) would have been helpful for vigour control and fruit quality. Fruit size was small.

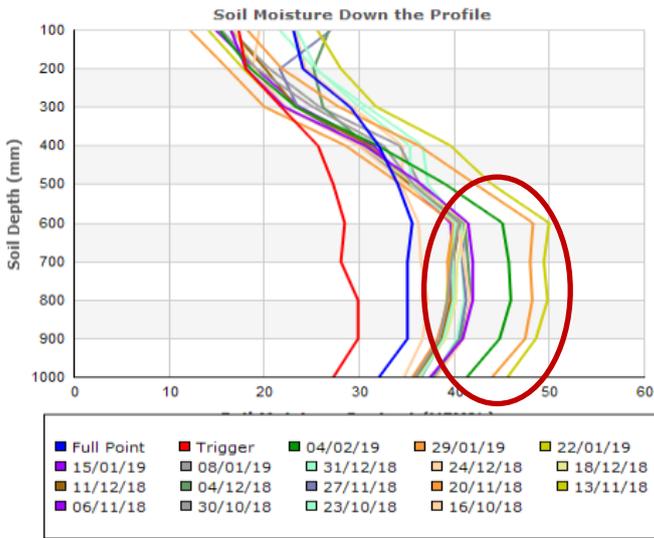


Figure 6: 2018/19 Galaxy soil moisture content.

Finally, this block had an extra reading done before this week's rain, to determine if the winter conditions were, indeed dry as some are saying.

On this particular block, they were not. The block was sitting slightly above full point. Remember readings to the right of the Full Point (*Blue line*) are wetter and too the left of the Trigger Line (*Red line*) are drier.

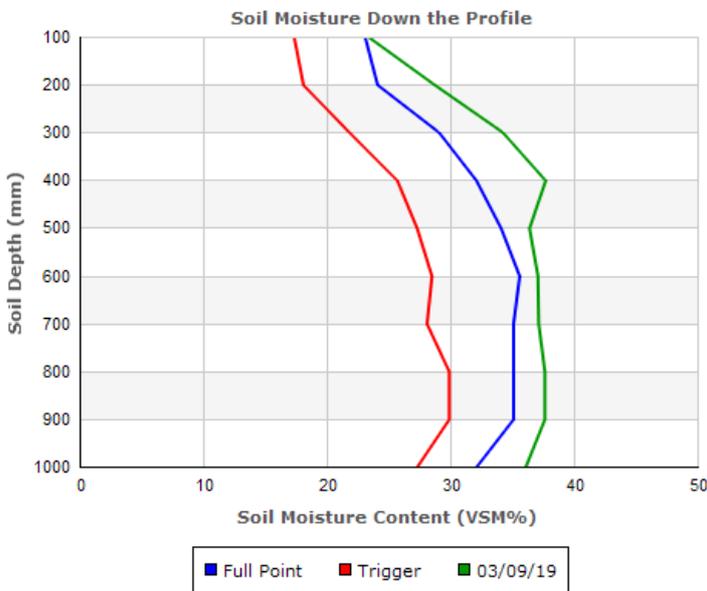


Figure 7: Sept 3rd, 2019 Galaxy soil moisture content.

Out of the 18 blocks we measured, on 3rd September, most were full or just over, and some had come down below full point just in the top 200mm.

We will take another reading before chemical thinning, to aid decision making.

What are the soils at your place doing?

Leander