

Pome Fruits—Implementation

Changing Tree Fruit Production Practices in Northern Italy and the European Economic Community

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The fruit-growing area in northern Italy known as South Tyrol with 41,000 acres of apples has been a leader in the implementation of IPM programs. An Advisory Service, comparable to our Extension Service, is responsible for grower education and program implementation. Advisors work very closely with individual growers on all aspects of tree fruit production including pest management. The majority of growers (about 4/5) are members of the extension organization. In recent years guidelines were developed for integrated production (IP) which attempts to reduce inputs of pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and fertilizer to a minimum. The aim is to ensure consistent yields of high quality fresh fruit with a production system which, in the long term, is ecologically, environmentally and economically sound. Integrated production emphasizes use of resistant rootstocks, matching varieties to appropriate sites, high density orchard systems with single rows, no use of synthetic growth regulators, reduced herbicide use not to exceed 20 percent of orchard area, intensive ground cover management to manage vigor and use of mulches in tree rows. Pest and disease control emphasizes use of resistant varieties, managing pests by controlling vigor (vegetative growth), encouraging beneficials by providing habitat in ground cover and hedgerows, also nesting sites for birds; minimizing pesticide use with intensive monitoring and using only selective pesticides. To minimize residue at harvest, longer than legally required day-to-harvest intervals must be observed. Fruit which is grown according to IP guidelines is identified in the marketplace with a special label. Growers who produce fruit with IP guidelines must be certified and are frequently inspected. IP programs exist now in several European countries. In light of the expanding European market, uniform IP guidelines are being considered for the European Economic Community.