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## Apple Growers Learn Techniques to Limit Pesticide Use at Cornell Fruit School

by Linda McCandless

GENEVA, NY: Spring got off to a good start for those New York apple growers who attended the Cornell Apple Integrated Pest Management (IPM) In-depth School on March 9 and 10 in Geneva, NY. The fruit school attracted more than 72 participants.



Jeff Soons, from Soons Orchard, Inc., in New Hampton, NY, just 65 miles outside

Dave Rosenberger (center) (Plant Pathology, Cornell University, Hudson Valley Lab) examines apple blossoms together with Cathy Ahlers (left) and Fritz Meyer (right). Rosenberger gave several presentations at the Apple IPM In-Depth School about disease management during the bloom, petal fall, and summer periods.

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of New York City, considered the school a "very good indoctrination into all the ins and outs of pest control."

"We don't use IPM as intensely as some growers, but I definitely expect to use some of what I learned," he said. The Soons family has been growing apples for 89 years. They currently farm 25 acres of apples along with an assortment of sweet corn, pumpkins, peaches, and other truck- and farm-market crops. "We have signed up with Orange County Extension Service for help with scouting for insects on our apple blocks hoping to gain information that will help us limit and space out sprays better," he said. Apples are one of the most intensively sprayed fruit crops, because they are very vulnerable to damage from insects and diseases.

"Attendance was highest from New York State," said NYSAES entomologist, Art Agnello, who was chairman of the organizing

committee. "There were 40 growers, four consultants, and 15 representatives from industry and government."

The purpose of the course was to provide a forum on the recommended methods of incorporating an integrated pest management and decision process into orchard management operations throughout the year. The format of the school was based on grower feedback from previous IPM fruit schools.

"In the past, growers have told us they have difficulty incorporating research-based management recommendations into their day-to-day operations," said Agnello. "We constructed these sessions with more of a grower's-eye view of the topics." Speakers were organized by topics that related to each other, and were asked to relate their recommendations to specific times of the growing season, and to include other issues a grower would be dealing with at the same time.

At the school, 29 speakers presented 52 separate talks on apple topics in the fields of entomology, plant pathology, horticultural science, fruit and vegetable science, natural resources, cooperative extension, agricultural engineering, and production practices. Most of the speakers whom were from the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, the Hudson Valley Lab at Highland, and CCE. Three guest speakers included Helmut Riedl, from Oregon State University, Starker Wright, from the University of Massachusetts, and Jim Gallott, a grower from Vermont.

Speakers gave their best advice on constructing a pest management plan for each part of the growing season for each developmental stage of apple. Input was solicited from other specialists as well as the school audience on how to best integrate and coordinate each strategy into an overall orchard system. In addition, information was presented on alternatives to the most commonly recommended practices, including promising results of current research trials, low-spray options, and alternative technologies that may be applicable in the near future.

"This school was 'in-depth', not so much because we examined every exhaustive detail and ongoing research effort related to each pest, but by how we considered applying each management recommendation as though we were managing an orchard," said Agnello.

Each participant received a syllabus containing a 280-pp "Apple IPM Proceedings" and supplementary articles, bulletins and manuals published by CCE, NYS-IPM, NYSAES, and USDA. Copies of the proceedings are available for \$30 by contacting Art Agnello at

[ama4@nysaes.cornell.edu](mailto:ama4@nysaes.cornell.edu), or by calling him at 315-787-2341. The event was sponsored by the Cornell Fruit Statewide Program Committee.

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**NOTE TO EDITORS:** Click on the above photo for a 300 ppi version. If you need a hard copy of the photo, please contact Rob Way at 315-787-2357, or at [rww2@cornell.edu](mailto:rww2@cornell.edu)

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