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After the London Olympics and Paralympics perhaps we should all be used to award ceremonies and emotional reactions, but the National Fruit Show had it all this year. The event even made it to BBC Radio 4 Sunday Lunchtime News with an excellent piece on our industry including interviews with worthy winners during the prize giving at the Show followed by a visit to Newmafruit at Chartham. The emotional reaction came from Sainsbury’s apple and pear technologist Dr Theresa Huxley who was genuinely surprised to receive the Fruit Culture Award from the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers, thus demonstrating how well deserved it was. Of course at The Fruit Grower we are delighted that there is real competition for the Tastiest Apple accolade, this year Jazz beating two-time winner Rubens.

Pulling off a great display of stunning fruit at a vibrant National Fruit Show was no mean achievement after this ‘annus horribilis’ as Show President, the Rt. Hon. Michael Jack reminded us. As the full report of the competition results states, it is remarkable that the most unhelpful weather in living memory had relatively little effect on the record entries for the apple and pear competition classes. The PR campaign outlined by Adrian Barlow at the launch of the season using the slogan “Still Tastes Great,” reported in detail in this issue, will support the efforts of all in the industry to make the most of this year’s crop. Speaking at the National Fruit Show Conference, marketing guru Professor David Hughes had some controversial views on the future for apple sales worldwide, which growers and marketeers, both here and abroad, would do well to consider.

What is undeniably essential for our industry’s future is to raise the profile of the UK fruit industry’s future employment prospects and, with perfect timing on the eve of the Show, Hadlow College announced that it has secured two major sponsors and two large fruit growing businesses able and willing to provide placements for two students on its three-year apprenticeship in Commercial Fruit Growing. This is good news indeed for the future of the fruit growing industry.
Kent fruit grower Clive Goatham has been awarded the Institute of Horticulture Achievement in Horticulture Award. This is a prestigious award made to individuals who have made an outstanding and significant contribution to horticulture. Recipients of the Award need not necessarily be members of the Institute and there are no more than 50 holders of the award at any one time.

Clive Goatham was a recipient of one of the six Achievement in Horticulture Awards made in 2012 which were presented by the outgoing President, Sue Minter FI Hort, at the Institute of Horticulture (IoH) AGM in October at Capel Manor Gardens.

An accolade that is only awarded when someone of truly outstanding merit is presented to the Institute, this year there were 11 nominations made to the IoH Council and it was a difficult choice to select the final six individuals. Clive’s nomination was written by IoH Council commercial sector representative Dr Theresa Huxley FI Hort, Top Fruit Technical Manager for Sainsbury, who said, “I am delighted that one of my largest apple and pear grower-packers has been recognised for his strategy of putting people and skills at the heart of his business. The growth of Clive’s business with Sainsbury to date and its outstanding performance in various technical orchard competitions this season, sends a strong message to all involved in the fresh produce industry and demonstrates that investment in horticultural and managerial skills is essential for success in an increasingly challenging environment”.

Clive is grateful to Dr Theresa Huxley for his nomination and genuinely feels proud that she deems his work in horticulture worthy of nomination for this prestigious award. He equally would like to thank Sainsbury for their continued commitment and focus on British horticulture and agriculture, without which he feels this wonderful accolade would not have been possible. Clive and his team believe that it is the Sainsbury focus on all that is English that has brought the industry to the position it currently enjoys, and it is this support and subsequent attention that has been instrumental in the continuing resurgence of the industry as a whole and particularly the top fruit sector.

This in turn has lead to this award being given to A.C. Goatham & Son as a whole, not solely to Clive, he feels, and states, “I am sure that in the future the Sainsbury commitment, as outlined in their 20/20 objectives, will prove to be the single most innovative factor that will ultimately lead to our great nation being able to feed itself in the future. Sainsbury is not currently receiving sufficient recognition for these tremendously innovative commitments which are instrumental in creating a sustainable industry for the future in which companies such as A.C. Goatham & Son can invest for the long term future with confidence”.

A.C. Goatham and Son have had an outstanding year, finding recognition from many quarters; the beginning of the year saw them crowned Top Fruit Grower of the Year, and the business has excelled in orchard competitions too, despite the adverse growing conditions.

**BIFGA Technical Day 2013**

The following companies have agreed to sponsor the BIFGA Technical Day to be held at Dale Hill Conference Centre, Ticehurst, East Sussex, TN5 7DQ on Wednesday 30 January 2013:

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Thanks to the sponsors, the all-day ticket, including lunch and coffee is just £27.50. The annual event is always a sell out and, as lunch numbers have to be pre-booked, payment in advance is **essential**.

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Dramatic uptake of low drift nozzles by fruit growers

A dramatic increase in the adoption of low drift nozzles amongst top fruit growers applying the insecticide chlorpyrifos during 2012 was announced at the National Fruit Show.

Resulting from the high profile pesticide stewardship campaign ‘Say No to Drift’, the 6% of UK orchards using the Albuz TVI low drift nozzles in 2011, rose to an impressive 88% in 2012, according to an independent survey of growers by the FERA Pesticides Usage Survey Group (PUSG) on awareness of the campaign, change in behaviour and their use of chlorpyrifos.

Campaign spokesperson, Steven Norman of Dow Agrosciences commented, “I am delighted with the rapid and widespread uptake in low drift nozzles by the UK fruit sector. I would like to thank everyone involved for making a commitment to helping secure the future of this important pest control tool”. The growers taking up the TVI nozzles who responded to this postal survey represented 5,796ha, which is around one third of UK orchards. The survey’s coverage will expand during the next six months with face-to-face visits to around 450 fruit growers.

Steve reports that, whilst a decision on the re-registration of chlorpyrifos is still pending, he is optimistic of a positive outcome in 2013, but this is wholly dependent on maintaining the momentum of the campaign.

“While chlorpyrifos is used throughout the agricultural and horticultural sectors, top fruit represents one of the most important crops for this campaign. Yet it was also the sector that only year ago had virtually zero experience in using low drift nozzles for chlorpyrifos, or any other chemical treatment”.

The ‘Chlorpyrifos: say NO to DRIFT’ campaign supports the long term availability of insecticide products containing chlorpyrifos in the UK. Steve added, “Chlorpyrifos has long provided UK growers with protection against key pests. However, its future is now dependent on the industry embracing new application technology to ensure spray drift does not reach watercourses. That’s why this stewardship initiative is so important. But the job is not done yet. We need all growers to maintain their support of the campaign into 2013 and to continue to build the confidence of the UK regulator, who is likely to decide on the future of chlorpyrifos next year”.

The campaign is managed by ADAS and spearheaded by the UK registrants of chlorpyrifos products: Dow AgroSciences, Makhteshim Agan and Headland Agrochemicals.
Garth Leslie Doubleday 1913 – 2012

The fruit industry will be saddened by the death in September of Garth Doubleday, aged 99 years, reports stating that “he was fit and well right up to the end, being out viewing the apple harvest and sorting the fat lambs but a few days before his death”.

He was a member of the renowned North Kent farming and fruit growing Doubleday family, who today, through his son, Oliver, gives direction to the business of GH Dean & Son at Sittingbourne.

For almost three generations the Doubledays have been early adopters of Kent’s fruit research and development with Garth Doubleday’s father, Sir Leslie Doubleday, pioneering the storage research of East Malling Research Station (EMRS), especially modified atmosphere storage, establishing ground-breaking on-farm gas stores in the 1930s along with Bob Mitchell. Testimony has it that the investment, which at the time was considered sizeable, had a payback period of less than one year.

Garth Doubleday was educated at Charterhouse, and obtained an MA in Agriculture at Clare College, Oxford, during which time he undertook undergraduate employment at EMRS. As with his father before him, he came to know the scientists at a personal level, catalysing the highest levels of knowledge transfer at that time.

He subsequently became a fully qualified shepherd and, although this was identified as being a reserved occupation, chose to serve in the Royal Artillery as a volunteer in World War II and, finding himself despatched to the theatre of war in North Africa, he was actively involved in the battles at El Alamein, Mareth and Wadi Akarit. He completed his service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Throughout his long farming career he was actively involved in the wider fruit growing community. He served on the NFU Top Fruit Committee and was Master of the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers in 1968, not only putting something back into the industry, but also dispensing financial support to worthy causes.

He also represented the Ministry of Agriculture on the Governing Body of Wye College, where he also served as Treasurer. Furthermore he served the Kent Agricultural Society on both the Executive and other committees.

In addition Garth Doubleday’s service to his country, he also served his county and his local parish community over his long life. He gained high office at county level, being High Sheriff of Kent in 1977/78, and became a Justice of the Peace, serving eight years as Chairman of the Sittingbourne Bench. He was appointed a DL in 1965. He was also a General Commissioner of Income Tax from 1970-1988, chairing it in his latter stay on the Commission.

But it is at community level that his legacy will be remembered, contributing to an enormous range of local activities, including parish councils, local churches and schools. Notably he served on the Rodmersham and Tonge Parish Councils, being Chairman of Tonge Parish Council for 50 years! He was a churchwarden of St Nicholas Church, Rodmersham for 40 years. He was a governor of several local schools, including Rodmersham Primary, St John’s at Sittingbourne, and Rowena School at Sittingbourne, and at various stages was Chairman of the Governors at each of them.

He represented the Kent Police Authority, serving as its Vice-Chairman for four years. Despite a rich and diverse involvement both on and off the farm and with his family, he pursued interests in racing and travel, being especially fond of Eastern Europe. He also adored fine art, especially religious icons.

If his notability in fruit farming were not enough, his participation in so many strands of community life mark Garth Doubleday as being truly remarkable and of a ‘gold standard’ not to be readily seen again.
Nitrate warning as new NVZ map looms

Farmers and growers are being urged to act now to avoid the risk of falling foul of planned changes to the Nitrate Variable Zone (NVZ) map.

The map, which shows the 59% of the country where strict rules on the use of nitrates apply, was re-drawn in the summer. It comes into force from 1 January 2013 and will affect the majority of English farms – some for the first time.

Farms within an NVZ must observe restrictions on the quantity of fertiliser and farm yard manure that can be spread and the times of year it can be spread in order to prevent nitrate pollution of water supplies.

Strict rules apply to record-keeping and reporting to ensure farms can prove to Defra exactly what they have used on their fields and when. Failure to comply with the new reporting regulations could result in fines or even prosecution.

Nigel Parsons, MD of rural software specialist Landmark Systems, said: “Farmers who have land within an NVZ are required to keep detailed records of all fertilisers and manures applied to land and they must be in a position to present that information to the authorities on demand. This can be a complex and time-consuming operation, particularly when you take into account the need to calculate average application strengths over the course of a year, and farmers are advised to consider using software which is specifically designed to capture and present NVZ data.”

The potential administration costs of the revised scheme are significant. “Now is the time for growers to ensure that their recording systems are in place and operating to provide correct information.”

Marston & Macgregor raise more than £4,400 for Children with Cancer

Berry Gardens’ Managing Director, Nick Marston, and colleague David Macgregor, successfully completed the 2012 Club Triumph Round Britain Reliability Run, driving over 2,000 miles round Britain in 48 hours. They were driving Nick Marston’s 1972 Triumph TR6.

The event started in North London at 6.00pm on Friday 5 October and finished on Sunday 7 October. The route took in John O’Groats and Lands End, and many miles of beautiful roads along the way. Nearly 100 Triumph cars took part, presenting an impressive spectacle as they travelled around the country.

Key sponsors of Marston & Macgregor’s run were the UK’s leading berry production and marketing group Berry Gardens, and their partners Driscoll’s. After the run a tired Nick Marston said, “Really hard work but great fun, and thanks to the many who donated. We have raised a great deal of money for a very worthwhile charity”. The charity’s website is available for any who wish to donate to this great cause at www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/nicholasmarston.

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In recognition of her role as a positive influence and communicator to the UK fruit industry, Dr Theresa Huxley, Fresh Produce Technologist for Sainsbury, was presented with the annual Fruit Culture Award by Jane Anderson, Master of the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers, at the National Fruit Show on 18 October.

In making the presentation, Jane Anderson remarked that, “Theresa is a very strong supporter of the UK fruit industry within her own company and more widely with other companies. She has pressed hard for the interests of UK growers and for the supermarkets to give support on their shelves for UK produce”.

An impressive indication of her exceptional dedication to the future of the industry is her personal initiative in establishing Huxley Trials Orchards at Pershore and Hadlow Colleges. She has marshalled the support of commercial sponsors in providing trees and support systems, establishing these orchards as a resource for teaching students, ensuring their interaction with commercial growers, and inspiring the next generation of horticulturalists.

The Master went on to say, “Theresa is passionate about encouraging young people to develop the skills essential for safeguarding the future of British apple production; it is entirely appropriate that the industry shows its appreciation of her wholehearted involvement and support”.

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Agrii announces new trial plot at East Malling

Agrii’s Technical Manager for Fruit, Colin Bird, announced at the National Fruit Show that Agrii was setting up a new fruit demonstration plot at East Malling Research (EMR), with work on its establishment starting in autumn 2012, and being planted in 2013.

“EMR is one of the last bastions of knowledge transfer, and lies at the heart of the UK fruit industry, in its past, present and future,” commented Colin. “We hope to use our demonstration site to engage with growers in the transfer of knowledge gained from trial work, and provide our agronomists with direct field experience across a range of technical areas.”

Colin explained that this long term commitment would be an ideal opportunity to set out trials of cultural systems, including the use of new varieties and clones, where orchard practices can be measured and monitored, and the results conveyed to growers. He added that all the modern developments being followed by fruit growers could be evaluated, enabling the site to showcase new ideas, all accessible in one place. “We will utilise the site’s day-to-day management under EMR Manager Graham Caspell’s guidance, with the Agrii fruit team providing the stimulus for new ideas and developments”, he said.

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November 2012
After 20 years Robert Mitchell gets his reward

As a stalwart supporter of the National Fruit Show for many years, and himself a former Chairman of the Marden Fruit Show Society, Robert Mitchell was ‘over the moon’ to receive what was for him the most prestigious cup in the Show - The Robert Mitchell Challenge Cup. Presented by his grandfather, also Robert Mitchell, the Cup recognised the best exhibit of a dessert apple variety bred at East Malling Research since 1967.

“Having submitted entries into this Class for approaching 20 years, we have never won it, with success regularly eluding us,” explained Robert.

“This year my wife Helen selected the fruit (variety Falstaff), packed and presented it, and took the prize with a total mark of 90.5%, a first-time win. We are really proud to have temporary custodianship of grandfather’s trophy, it almost returning to its spiritual home at least for one year”.

Apology for printing error

The Bayer CropScience advertisement on the front cover of the October issue of The Fruit Grower was printed incorrectly and omitted the required safety and product information. We at ACT Publishing would like to draw our readers’ attention to this error, for which we apologise.

Poland – Chance or Challenge?

Do you fancy a trip with a difference? The Under 40s Fruit Growers Conference allows you to experience cutting edge developments in the fruit growing world alongside like-minded young people from the industry. Every two years there’s an overseas visit and we spend three days visiting growers somewhere interesting and seeing at first-hand what their techniques are and how we could make use of them in UK. In 2013, from 6 to 9 March, we’ll be off to Poland. You could be with us!

The visits will include: soft fruit and top fruit growers, the Polish Horticultural Research Institute, plant breeders and propagators, plant nurseries, a processing factory and others.

For more information visit The Under40s website: www.U40s.co.uk
Remarkably, the most unhelpful weather in living memory had relatively little effect on entries for the apple and pear competition classes at the National Fruit Show in October, sponsored by Norman Collett Ltd, BASF, Agrovista and ICA.

Until early October, however, entries looked like being well down on the average of around 150, but a late surge meant that they totalled 134 from 24 growers.

Trade exhibitor numbers were also very encouraging and included 19 newcomers to make a total of 94, the most for some time. Together with visitors, exhibitors benefited from the Show’s improved and extended layout. The event, organised by the Marden Fruit Show Society (MFSS) and held at the Kent County Showground, Detling, Kent, was also marked by new faces among the fruit and juice exhibitors, while a number of apple varieties appeared for the first time.

The latter were noted by Adrian Barlow, chief executive of English Apples and Pears, who said the Show was seeing “a transformation in varieties”. But for any of them to succeed they required good skin finish and vibrant colour to attract consumers. Also essential was very good eating quality, orchard performance and storage potential. “It’s terrific that growers are investing in new varieties like Zari, for example, which is an exceptionally good September apple that comes onto the market before Cox,” he said.

MFSS President, the Rt Hon Michael Jack, said the Show demonstrated that growers were achieving “a tremendous triumph over adversity and if the industry was in difficulties it could not put on a Show like this”. It had two full halls of trade exhibitors wanting to meet prospective customers and he declared that he continued to feel optimistic about the industry.

Ironically, for the first time in the Show’s recent history a Howgate Wonder entry was judged winner of the Covent Garden Prize for the Best All Round Exhibit of Apples and Pears and the Roderic Sarson Memorial Trophy for the Best All Round Exhibit of Apples. It also won the Podger Norton Trophy for the top culinary apple.

The entry was awarded 99.25 per cent, the same as for the best dessert apple exhibit, Egremont Russet. However, the judges preferred the Howgate Wonder as it had the perfect score of 20 out of 20 for freedom from pest and disease. The Howgate Wonder was entered in the Any Other Culinary Apple Variety class by Kent growers Alan Smith and his wife Mary under their company name of Loddington Farm. It was produced on their West Pike Fish Farm by a
six acre orchard about half of which originally was Howgate Wonder, although that was no longer the case. The orchard, on M26, was planted in 1980 at about 15ft by 10ft. The variety is usually sold for juicing but this season’s crop might go to a processor in Northern Ireland where there is a very good demand for processing apples due to its poor Bramley crop.

The other top scoring entry, which won the Stokes Bomford Rose Bowl for the Best Dessert Apples, was entered by Kate Langridge of Mallions Farm, Curtisden Green, Goudhust, Kent. Although only 19 years old she is already an experienced exhibitor having won prizes at the previous two Shows. Last year, for example, she prepared some of the Rubens entries for growers affiliated to Norman Collett Ltd, which markets the variety. “Our Russet this year was of superb quality - the best so far,” she maintained. “We grow it as a pollinator, mainly for Gala and Cox.”

Her father Colin, who runs the farm with his brother Ian, commented: “Kate has a job as a legal secretary in Ashford and she booked a day off three weeks before the Show [to attend the prize giving] so you might say that she was very confident about winning.”

Kate also won the class for under 26 entrants and that for Any Other Variety of Dessert Apple, both with Jonagored. The latter class attracted 16 entries of 12 varieties including newcomers Amelia, Cheerfull (sic) Gold, Pinova and Evelina.

Nigel and Annette Bardsley collected their usual big collection of prizes including the Fyffes Salver for the top Bramley exhibit. They also won the Bayer Rose Bowl for the best pear entry - Conference, the Fiennes Cornwallis Trophy for the entrant gaining the highest points total in all classes and the John Acock Memorial Trophy for scoring the most points in the culinary classes. Their points total was boosted by wins in the Braeburn and 70-75mm Cox classes.

The Bardsleys won both 90-100mm and 80-90mm Bramley classes for the second year running. They were from a 20-year-old five acre orchard on MM111 spaced at 15ft square that crops consistently well and invariably produces fruit of a nice shape.

The orchard, at River Farm, Staplehurst, Kent, was sprinkled two or three times against frost just before pink bud stage. Even frosts that early can cause frost ring, reckoned Nigel Bardsley. The operation’s main aim was to preserve the fruit’s inherent high quality which it did very effectively.

“It’s been a difficult year and we did struggle to find good enough samples for showing,” admitted Bardsley, who also grows some 25 acres of Rubens and 20 acres of Cameo and continues to plant both varieties. “We are now grubbing the old [original] clone of Cameo and planting the much redder Caulflight clone,” he said. “We’re able to pick most of this in just one pick leaving very little for the second pick.”

The Bardsleys won second prize in the Cameo class which, together with the Rubens class, was easily the largest in the Show with 19 entries (each). They were also the biggest classes last year with 17 and 18 entries respectively.

Determined the best tasting dessert apple was no easy task for the judges. The competition was sponsored by The Fruit Grower.
The Cameo class was won by J A Coltup and Partners to repeat their 2011 success when their entry was awarded the Sarson Memorial Trophy for the Best All Round Apple exhibit.

The best Rubens was A C Goatham’s entry. This variety was judged the tastiest apple in 2010 and 2011 in the competition sponsored by The Fruit Grower. This year, however, it was surpassed by Chandler and Dunn’s Jazz, although the Jazz class was won by A Hinge and Sons. The second place Rubens was F J Adams’s entry and third place, also Rubens, was grown by A R Neaves. Judges of the Tastiest Apple Competition were Adrian Barlow, grower Peter Checkley, former grower Peter Barwick, Empire World Trade’s Doreen Spikings, EMR’s Karen Thurston and Debbie Rees of the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich.

There was a good entry of pears. The best pears were the Bardsleys’ Conference in a class with 10 entries, while the Comice class with nine entries was won by David Banfield and his wife Rita. The Concorde class, which attracted five entries, was won by R R Day and P J D Hall. Best of the Any Other Pear Variety class was J L Baxter’s culinary variety Black Worcester. Last year they won that class with Winter Nellis.

The Banfields, who won last year’s Bonanza Prize, have a wealth of experience in preparing entries for the Show, including those for Clive Edmed and Flightshott Farm. They have 10 acres of orchards at Horsmonden, Kent of which about 4 acres are 20-year-old pears spaced at 12ft by 8ft comprising Comice, Conference and Concorde, a combination that helps ensure good pollination.

They also have a small area of Pinova, a Belgian Cox x Duchess of Aldenburg cross that David Banfield claimed is the juiciest apple he has ever eaten. It also has excellent flavour, he said.

Other class winners were Miller and Bradley (Gala), Newmafruit Farms (Kanzi) and Miller and Bradley (65-70mm Cox).

Entries for the three juice classes were only eight down on last year’s record of 59. Now in its 26th year the competition was established on permission of Agrichandlers (Emma Nash Ltd). Top juice for the second year running was produced by Concordia provides training with CMI accredited qualifications specific to horticulture. Not only is the content relevant to land based industry, but the course structure avoids the busy harvest time too.

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Hill Farm Juice, based at Swanmore, Hampshire and run by Chris Mason and his wife Carol.

Chairman of the juice judges were Dr David Pennell and Dr Jonathan Blackman and their teams comprised Colin Dover and David Johnson, both formerly of EMR, and EMR’s Emma Easton and Jenny Bartlett.

They have been doing the job for several years and so the consistency of judging was good, maintained juice competition steward Robert Oliver. “The quality of pressing was very, very good, but some entries were let down on flavour because the fruit was not fully mature when picked, probably due to the late season and so sugars did not have enough time to develop. But even the poorer juices were still pretty good,” he said.

The Masons won the Graham Amos Trophy for the Best All Round Entry, a clear Ashmead’s Kernel juice which was also awarded the A and P Hill (Fruit) Trophy for the winner of the Single Variety Juice class. This class had 27 entries compared with 15 for the Blended Apple Juice class and nine for the class for blended juice of any fruit grown in the UK. The Ashmead’s Kernel was from a 12-acre orchard whose fruit is used solely for juice production. Its other varieties are Cox, Bramley, Discovery and Russet. Outgrades from a number of farms in the area, including Lord Selborne’s Blackmoor Fruit Farm, are also used to contribute to the total of some 250,000 bottles a year sold under the Hill Farm Juice brand.

This output includes 12 straight varieties in 75cl bottles and six in the 25cl size, plus five different blends in each bottle size. In addition, the Masons produce several thousand five litre bag-in-box containers per year of a range of juices of different varieties. “We produce blends of clear and cloudy Cox and Bramley, apple and fresh root ginger, apple and blackcurrant and apple and elderflower from our own 10-acre plantation,” explained Mason.

“We were quite surprised to win because our Ashmead’s Kernel was the only clear juice entry in the competition,” he added. “In the past we made mainly clear juice but now we make a lot of cloudy juice as well.”

The Masons find that the biggest growth market is high class hotels and restaurants that want something different and superior to serve to their customers. They consider that they are at the top end of artisan producers in that they are professional in the way they operate, devoting a lot of care and attention to each batch of juice, aided by “a very good, loyal team of six local workers”.

Other regular juice competition winners like Newent, Gloucestershire growers R H and J C Elgie and Maynard House Orchards, Bradfield Combust, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk are in the same mould as the Masons. The Elgies won the Crown Trophy for their apple and raspberry juice and Maynard House Orchards won the Four Jays Trophy with an Early Windsor and Grenadier blend.

In the straight variety class the Ashmead’s Kernel was awarded 65 points out of 75, just half a point more than the Elgies’ Cox. It was top for taste with 25 points out of 30, which is not surprising as it is generally considered to have the best flavour of any apple. The Elgies’ apple and raspberry juice also scored 65 out of 75 but was awarded one point less (24) for taste.

Robert Oliver considered that it is very difficult to press raspberries without getting an
Two of the apple varieties appearing at the Show for the first time – Cheerfull (sic) Gold and Amelia. They were in the Any Other Dessert Variety class.

‘off’ flavour and that said a lot for the Elgies’ entry. He suggested that it would be a good idea for the entrants to taste other growers’ juices to see if they agreed with the judges.

There was good support for the soft fruit classes, particularly raspberries, whose class had 19 entries compared with seven for strawberries and eight for blackberries. A J and C Snell won the raspberry class’ CPM Trophy and the F Edmed and Sons Prize. The best summer fruited strawberries came from EU Plants and received the Berry Gardens Prize. A Berry Gardens Prize was also awarded to the Snells for the top everbearer strawberries. T Chambers’ entry was judged the best blackberry and won the CPM prize.

The Kentish cobnut and Kent Messenger Prize were won by E J Nicholls, but prizes for the other nut classes were not awarded. Robert Mitchell Farms and L Stevens and Son again won the five heaviest apple and pear competitions respectively, the former with Bramleys weighing 3.605kg and the latter with Comice weighing 3.7kg. The heaviest single fruits weighed 0.735kg and 0.76kg respectively. Channel Weighing and Chingford Fruit provided the prizes.

There were 44 entries from 12 growers for the Tastiest Tomato Competition judged by the HDC’s Andrew Tinsley, Waitrose’s David Northcroft, June Wilkins of the Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies and Jim Quinlan, formerly of EMR.

The winner was Flavourfresh Salads with Cheryl. Second was Cornerways Nursery with Piccolo and third was Wight Salads with Angelle. The David Stapley Trophy was awarded to the winner.

N P Seymour’s stand was judged the best in the Show and Kent Fruit Services had the Best Machinery Stand. Both received the South East Farmer Prize. Kanzi won the Fresh Produce Consortium Prize for the Best Shell Scheme Stand.

Winner of the schools’ £200 decorated pumpkin prize, contributed by Hadlow College to invest in school allotments, was the Lady Boswell Church of England School. The schools grew their own pumpkins from seed provided by Suttons.

Twenty apple and pear competition entrants qualified for the Bonanza Prize, sponsored by M3 Solar, comprising either a domestic 4Kw 16-panel system worth around £10,000 or £10,000 towards the cost of a 50Kw system. The entrants’ names went into a hat and those of George and Michael Chambers of Northiam Farm, Horsmonden, Kent, were the winners.

The post-show event, the Festival of British Fruit, was sponsored by A C Goatham and Son. It took place at Wakehurst Place, Ardingly, West Sussex, where the public were able to view, taste and purchase the best of the competition class entries.

Pupils at a number of schools grew and decorated these pumpkins.
National Fruit Show 2012 a triumph over adversity

Despite 2012 being labelled an *annus horribilis* by most fruit growers, with inferior pollination conditions setting the tone for the season ahead and subsequent incessant periods of wet weather frustrating orchard operations, the top fruit industry put on a first class display of fruit at the National Fruit Show.

The Marden Fruit Show Society’s President, Rt. Hon. Michael Jack, was adamant that this year’s Show sent out a powerful message from the English top fruit sector to consumers that home grown fruit will be available this season.

“Brushing aside doom and gloom, this year’s Show is a terrific testament to the triumph of investment over adversity, where new orchards feature new varieties, and new systems are supported by modern storage and distribution systems,” said Michael Jack.

“When you add the full support of the multiple retailers and the trade that serves the growers, you sense a high level of positivity across the industry. We are witnessing an unprecedented level of retail support for our product, with a remarkable level of understanding about the vagaries of a poor English summer”.

The President reminded his audience of the top fruit industry’s aspiration to further increase its market share, and move it towards 50% over the next few years, particularly in the post-Christmas period.

The Marden Fruit Show Society’s Chairman, Sarah Calcutt, was delighted with the arrival of 19 new trade stands and six new fruit competition entrants, bringing the total numbers of fruit exhibitors to 135, to create a fine display of English fruit, including one entry from Loddington Farm in Kent that scored 99.25%.

Both the President of the Marden Fruit Show Society, Rt. Hon. Michael Jack (left) and the Chairman, Sarah Calcutt, were amazed by the quantity and quality of this year’s Show fruit, given the appalling weather conditions experienced by growers.

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Being Emeritus Professor of Food Marketing at Imperial College, London, gives David Hughes a remarkable insight into the retail fruit sectors, especially as he is a non-Executive Director of Berry Gardens, the UK’s foremost grower-owned berry-marketing co-operative.

In offering his thoughts on top fruit, he was outraged that the advertising industry had ‘stolen our clothes’ when it came to promoting processed fruit-based foods, offering ‘liquid’ answers to 5-a-day campaigns in the form of smoothies, squeezies and juices purporting to offer consumers health-giving elixirs. “We must never forget that fruit growers are blessed in providing health-giving fresh food,” said Prof. Hughes. “We have the ‘eat-well’ plate and, within the traffic lights of food acceptability, always bring up the green light. But that said, the 5-a-day campaign across Europe is failing, as now consumers are encouraged to ‘drink’ more fruit and vegetables - what a joke!”

Prof. Hughes was concerned that supermarkets dominate the route to consumers, taking a 92% market share of all fresh produce sold, and that fresh produce is perceived to be expensive in the minds of consumers. “I do think that retailers lack ‘theatre’ and imagination in presenting fresh food to consumers, and that growers are facing a real price/cost squeeze, especially in these austere times,” he argued.

“On taking a view of the nations who import foods - especially the tiger economies like China, India, Russia and Brazil - their imports are rocketing. Whilst bananas, berries and grapes are growing in sales volume, apples are declining. In the EU there is a suggestion of overproduction, with the CAP’s Producer Organisation fuelling investment, not demand. Although prices have nudged up by near to 5% in recent years, rising costs have far exceeded that figure”.

Prof. Hughes concluded that all these portents suggest that things will have to change in the future, and maintained that the fruit industry must retain its lead on green issues as consumers expect it, and retailers should retain their ‘good/better/best’ ranges, to suit consumers’ lifestyles. “With the ever-increasing trend in snacking, local convenience stores will become more prevalent, especially if each organisation has more to offer in negotiations with retailers. This could be achieved by closer cooperation between selling desks. “None of this detracts from the fact that tree fruits need to have selection and choice, with a clear quality differentiation and branding, and that ‘added value’ products should be sought, given that farmers are becoming more fashionable”, he said. “Can the top fruit industry find a new hero?” he asked.

“They’ve stolen our clothes,” objected Professor David Hughes.

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Stone fruit growers will be delighted by a new alliance between Nick Dunn of FP Matthews Ltd and Artevos, a co-operative of 13 German nurseries specialising in fruit trees, but especially stone fruits. FP Matthews has been supplying top quality cherry varieties in recent decades, contributing to the UK’s renaissance in cherry production on dwarf tree systems using much-improved, self-fertile, late black varieties.

Nick Dunn has now gained access to the Artevos stable of stone fruit varieties, including new, improved, cherries and plums. Artevos team member, Sabine Fey, attending the National Fruit Show for the first time, was delighted to highlight their cherry and plum varieties. “We think that Haganta, Presenta and Bellamira may interest UK growers, especially the highly flavoured Haganta blue plum, and the blue/black Presenta that can be stored into November,” she said.

Of the cherries offered by Artevos, Nick considered that the crack-resistant Christiana, and the large fruited (33-34mm) Carmen may appeal to the UK market, along with Tamara, a highly-flavoured, good-sized cherry that has a large following in Germany.

“This will be an interesting and exciting collaboration as it gives UK growers considerable access to mainland Europe’s stone fruit breeding work, enabling them to keep planting new varieties for the future,” said Nick.

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**FP Matthews collaborates with German nurseries**

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Precision soil mapping and liming services offered to fruit growers

Steve Pack of Specialist Spreading Services was exhibiting at the National Fruit Show for the first time, offering a new specialist spreading service, using very modern technologies, to top fruit growers.

Detailed soil pH mapping, using GPS technology, is part of the service, and the company utilises this mapping to make precision applications of appropriate lime and fertiliser requirements. “We also offer detailed P, K and Mg sampling as well, making the application of major soil elements both precise and cost effective,” explained Steve Pack.

He explained that his 1.3m wide customised field equipment was ideal for modern intensive orchard systems, and that he could apply lime and fertiliser in bands, or broadcast. “We supply both lime and quarried gypsum for all our customers,” he added. “We pride ourselves in a rapid one-day turnaround service, with the technology offering growers significant high efficiencies in terms of application rates and costs.”
Composted green waste now widely used in new orchard plantings

A few years ago The Fruit Grower reported on the development of new soil conditioners based on recycled green waste otherwise destined for landfill sites.

Now its availability and use is widely accepted across the industry as a cost-effective method of improving orchard performance in the early years after planting and reducing fertiliser costs in the longer term.

Phil Bartholomew of Tunstall near Sittingbourne, Kent is an experienced agricultural contractor specialising in heavier lifts, and is well able to supply and apply bulky organic composted waste to fruit growers in Kent. With several composting sites now established around the county, the raw material is accessible and can be economically moved and spread. “The material is not heavy,” said Phil. “It’s the handling, transport and sheer volume that increases the cost”.

Experience shows the practice to be beneficial and cost-effective, with recommended application rates of 50 tonnes/ha costing around £1.50 per tonne for the raw material, and about £8 to £10 per tonne applied and £6 to £7 per tonne for haulage.

“It is recommended that surface composting is carried out every three years,” said Phil. “Our machinery, although large, will readily drive through the 3m row widths used in modern plantings, but we do prefer a 5m headland to turn our equipment”. ◆

Two large French fruit tree nurseries now in alliance

News from the National Fruit Show confirms that John Breach’s long-term association with Pépinières du Valois, run by Bruno Essner, has been further strengthened by the nursery’s new alliance in France during the summer with renowned nurseryman Thierry Ligonniere, of the former Davodeau Ligonniere nursery in the Loire Valley, Valois and Ligonniere together represent a formidable source of nursery material, having collaborated in research and development in the past.

John Breach is delighted to be working with two such eminent European nurserymen, recognising that it will gain access to greater volumes of high quality fruit trees, and a steady flow of new and improved varieties for growers in the future.

“It is very reassuring to be supported by extensive research and development from France, and bodes well for us to access some really good new cultivars to follow on from recent successes like Brookfield Gala and Cheerfull Gold,” said John Breach. ◆

(Left to right) Peter Breach, Fiona Davidson, Cameo Technical Manager, nurseryman Thierry Ligonniere and wholesale tree supplier John Breach are all delighted by the strengthened alliance with the French nurseries.
Tree fruit growers recognise that if they are to sustain modern intensive orchards at yields of 60 tonnes/ha or more, they will have to employ field fertigation practices in a similar way to progressive berry growers. Andy Church introduced his Ultra Soil Solutions business to the market two years ago with technologies originating in Australia, a high-level user of water for agriculture. He brought to the National Fruit Show for the first time his frontline product, liquid ‘Gyp-Flo’, a suspension of technical grade 35% w/v calcium and 25% w/v sulphur, providing not only an essential supply of calcium to improve fruit quality and shelf life, but also improving soil structure by reducing sodium build-up in the root zone.

“Experience leads us to recognise Gyp-Flo’s ability to flush out any salts applied into the root zones in any growing season where fertigation practices are employed,” explained Andy. “With its direct influence on soil pH, any applications have a direct effect on nutrient uptake into the plants, whether trees, bushes or berries. This represents a genuine win/win situation for growers”.

Ultra Soil Solutions also supply a liquid ‘pH Plus’ containing calcium carbonate for soil pH management, a ‘Hydra-Gyp’ product which is a natural flocculant to improve soil porosity, and ‘Triple Strike’, a one-step treatment for algal blooms in water storage systems, which also lowers water pH by 0.5 to 1.0.

Calcium-based products offer a direct impact on field fertigation

It was refreshing to see a new supplier in the field of electric pruners at the National Fruit Show, namely MAX Europe bv, supplying cordless Li-ion battery-powered secatore.

Paul Zieljens of MAX Europe explained that the PASJ30 kit, which originated in Japan, and has now come into Europe via the Netherlands in July 2012. “The first thing to say is that we have secured NP Seymour Ltd as our UK dealer to work in support of this first class product”, said Paul.

He explained that the secatore were extremely well balanced, with the power pack being located in the rear of the unit, and the grip section being suitable for those with smaller hands. Two striking features are the double-action blade movement, with top and bottom blades being synchronised, and the stainless steel blades. The blades have two settings on the control trigger, for wood of 15mm and 30mm diameter. The unit comes with a side holster for safe storage when not in use.

“Stainless steel will always retain its sharpness longer, and maintain efficiency over longer working periods and, of course, will not require any specific lubrication as it has ‘built-in’ lubrication,” explained Paul. “Experience in Japan confirms that the blades will last 2.5 times longer than conventional blades”. The double-acting blade cutting movement resulted in much cleaner cut surfaces on woody material, giving rapid healing to minimise the risk of infection.

Paul explained that the battery pack comprised a lightweight Li-ion (lithium) unit, weighing 1.2kg, and having a capacity for 5.5 hours of operation. Each unit was supplied with a second battery, and it only took 45 minutes to fully charge the original battery. The battery is carried in a holder on the operators back, and the operating cable is held within an armband worn on the upper arm.

Much improved electric secatore now available

Andy Church of Ultra Soil Solutions is confident that his range of calcium-based fertigation products will have a direct impact on maintaining high yield and fruit quality in modern, high output, orchard systems.
NP Seymour remains at the forefront of orchard equipment supply

No doubt Nick Seymour’s team were delighted to take the Best Trade Stand award at the National Fruit Show, but of much greater importance to them was having available orchard equipment required for the operations likely to dominate future low cost production methods.

Two high-cost centres feature in modern fruit growing - the cost of winter pruning and the cost of hand thinning modern varieties with the capacity to set very large numbers of flowers in May.

The BMV cutting blade system offers flexibility and accommodates both winter ‘brown-wood’ pruning, and what may be the key to successful fruit wall management in the future, summer ‘green wood’ pruning, essential to contain tree volumes whilst maintaining large fruit bud potential. “The mast can be up to 4m high, adjustable from 2m to 4m, and of course, can also be used for windbreak management. It can be fitted with sensors, not only to detect and swing back for tree posts, but also to avoid hail netting”, said Nick Seymour. “We have four such rigs out in the industry, so field experience by the pioneers will develop rapidly”.

A similar picture emerges for the Darwin fruit thinner, now widely employed around 10 to 15 fruit businesses. Although not widely used in 2012, a favourable spring will encourage maximum use, where the cost of fruitlet thinning is the most challenging of all in fruit growing. “The performance of the Darwin flail is well documented, and many machines have been rented out,” said Nick. “But come a good blossom period and all the stops will have to be pulled out, requiring timeliness and opportunity to be maximised”.

Nick also revealed that he now has a second generation of picking trains available, incorporating all the features suggested by growers who have gained much experience with them in recent years.

David Banfield proud of 30 years exhibiting at the Fruit Show

There are few more successful exhibitors at the National Fruit Show than David Banfield, who this year notched up 30 years of exhibiting, with a constant stream of winners’ rosettes to grace his packhouse.

This year David was proud to see the rosettes attached to his prize-winning entry of Comice pears, and recalled his prize winning Idared entry some years ago that amassed an impressive 99.75%.

“I have always been a great supporter of the Fruit Show, and have encouraged the younger members of my family to put entries in,” said David. “Over the years we have achieved some success, and not so many years ago visited German fruit growing regions as winners of the Bonanza Prize”.

Nick Seymour remains convinced that he offers the orchard equipment necessary to drive down orchard costs and protect margins, especially the BMV fruit wall trimmer.
English top fruit season launch

by Joanna Wood

Continuing the tradition of launching the English top fruit season at a prestigious venue, this year the classical splendour of the Queen’s House at Greenwich Park was chosen.

As EAP Chairman, Adrian Barlow asked guests at the dinner, “Where else combined the glamour of this year’s Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations with the terrific success of the London 2012 Olympic Games?” Indeed, the Olympic Dressage arena and stands were still in situ close by. Although 2012 has been a triumph for Team GB, for the UK fruit industry it has been more a ‘triumph over adversity’, and this was the main theme of Adrian’s launch speech. Summarizing the marketing season ahead Adrian said, “It will be a tough season but this industry has strong foundations to grow in the future”.

Across Europe everyone has admitted that forecasting this year’s crop has been extremely difficult and, in Adrian’s opinion, the final total EU apple harvest is likely to be 15% down on last year rather than the official 9% reduction. This would make it the lightest crop since before 1998. We already know that pears in Europe are 25% down, although UK pears are only 4% down on 2011. For our main dessert apple varieties, Gala was likely to be 14% down, Cox 37%, Braeburn 35% and the new varieties together about 29% down on last year’s production figures. It is of course disappointing not to build on the steadily climbing sales figures since 2006/7 (a 65% rise to 2011/12) attributed by Adrian to a combination of factors including increasing consumer demand, support from customers, good marketing and huge investment by growers. This performance recently drew praise from Mid Kent MP and Sports and Olympics Minister, Hugh Robertson, who congratulated the English industry on “a superb team performance”.

The ‘Still Tastes Great’ campaign

Certainly not an apology, the intention of the ‘Still Tastes Great’ campaign to reassure consumers is widely supported by multiple retail customers. Adrian publicly thanked retailers for their support this year in lowering appearance specifications in view of the relative lack of sunshine this summer, and due probably to the late season which has allowed more time for sugars to develop.

However, there will be more weather-marking than usual on the skin of English apples resulting in some discoloration and smooth russet (small areas of light browning). This marking does not affect taste and so the industry has launched a “Still Tastes Great” campaign to reassure shoppers.

Excellent PR coverage

The message Adrian has been keen to broadcast is to urge consumers to choose this year’s crop for taste rather than looks. This approach also emphasizes how everyone in the industry is working hard in the interests of consumers. To quote from the launch press release: “In order to maximize

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the availability of English apples whilst ensuring that the fruit will satisfy shoppers, the major supermarkets have decided to relax their rules on appearance this year in order to meet as much of the ever-increasing demand as possible”.

Unrepresentative press reports of crop failures in the summer necessitated obtaining more balanced coverage of the true situation. Excellent articles in the Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, Guardian, Daily Mail and FT during September were the result. A round of interviews undertaken by Adrian in late September and early October for BBC and ITV Breakfast television, Simon Mayo’s BBC Radio 2 Show and at least 20 BBC local radio stations resulted in excellent coverage of the ‘Still Tastes Great’ message.

The usual initiative of sending samples of fruit to broadcasters and journalists (for example Jay Rayner, food reporter for BBC TV’s The One Show) was already paying dividends with extra coverage. The consumer and trade press were, as usual, praised for being supportive of the English industry.

The Bramley Campaign will continue to promote cooking via a number of avenues, including its increasingly popular Facebook page. Due to a combination of grubbing, caused by poor returns in recent years, and this year’s weather, the Bramley crop will be at least 22% less than in 2011. As there was insufficient supply to meet demand towards the tail end of last year’s marketing season, Adrian warned that Bramley supplies will again be in short supply.

Key factors for continued success

Concluding his survey of prospects for the top fruit season, Adrian acknowledged that, apart from this temporary blip, the industry has the potential to increase production by 40% compared with last year’s figures and help meet government concerns over food security. However, he stressed that this renaissance of the UK apple industry will only be possible if growers receive increased returns to offset the continuing rises in production costs. There are three key factors in making this happen, according to Adrian. Firstly growers should continue to develop their business skills, particularly being aware of their costs and those of the competition abroad. Secondly, it was important to make customers aware of the necessary returns to sustain a profitable industry. Finally long term plans for the industry must be forged in a partnership between retailers, growers and marketing organisations, so that the right volumes of the required varieties are available to consumers.

Adrian finished on a high note after admitting that it may be disappointing that there will not be an advance in sales this year after eight seasons of increasing volumes, but the industry is well placed to grow, given favourable weather next year, as consumers continue to want our produce.
On the eve of this year’s National Fruit Show, Hadlow College announced that it had its first sponsors and growers in place for its innovative, new three year apprenticeship in Commercial Fruit Production. Before an invited audience from the industry, the College’s Director of Finance & Resources, Mark Lumsden-Taylor introduced Agrovista and Norman Collett Ltd as the first sponsors of this scheme.

The Fruit Growing Apprenticeship is spread over three years and is structured to enable apprentices to work on farms, in packhouses, in logistics and in supermarkets, giving them experience and knowledge across the supply chain, explained Hadlow’s Maria Jeffery. The College is aiming to have ten apprentices at any one time at different stages in their development. Whilst being based with one grower and mentored, they may work with other companies to enable them to gain experience in all areas as well as receiving technical training at Hadlow. In addition to a sponsor for each apprenticeship there is a grower who provides some, or all, of the placement and guidance for the apprentice. The first two growers to join the scheme are A.C Hulme & Sons near Ash in Kent and S&A Produce (UK) Ltd who, whilst based in Hereford, also have a substantial enterprise at Hernhill Nursery near Faversham, Kent.

The first two sponsors of apprenticeships under the scheme are well known within the industry. Agrovista, which employs 270 people across its business including a team of fruit agronomists, sees the development of technology across the industry as vital to a sustainable future. Charles Coslett, Head of Specialist Divisions at Agrovista, outlined the company’s commitment to supporting the industry it serves and its pride in being able to help provide this opportunity to help the next generation to enter the fruit industry and develop skills in a hands-on manner, which he hoped would help to encourage a new generation into the industry. The second sponsor is Norman Collett Ltd whose technical manager, Nigel Jenner, is himself a former Hadlow student. Norman Collett Ltd strives to ensure their partnership with growers and customers means a sustainable future for their business and sees its support of the fruit growing apprenticeships as a logical step in supporting the future of the industry.

The growers providing placements for the first two apprentices can offer them challenging introductions to the fruit industry and a good grounding in its operations. Tom Hulme, the third generation involved in managing the substantial family business of A. C Hulme & Sons, which has some 500 acres of tree fruit in addition to hops, arable and livestock enterprises, spoke of the need to ensure that ‘new blood’ comes through into food production. S&A Produce, with production sites in Herefordshire and Kent, are one of the largest producers of soft fruit in the UK with both field-grown and protected crops. Their HR Director David Suggett outlined the company’s desire to support training in production horticulture and said that the apprentice would be based at their Hernhill Nursery. They have also commenced sponsorship of a final year BSc Horticulture student at Warwickshire College, Pershore Campus. The company sees the benefit of the continued existence of specialist training courses in fruit production well into the next decade and beyond. Without the support of producers, opportunities for home-grown talent in the industry will simply disappear. The search is now on for those who wish to apply for these apprenticeships.

To conclude the reception, Adrian Barlow, Chief Executive of English Apples and Pears, delivered a ‘tour de force’ outlining the renaissance, growth and glittering future which the fruit industry presents.

Dr David Pennell reports
Cameo cropping improves following conversion to fruit walls reports Dr David Pennell

The Cameo UK Farm Walk in late September, held at Nigel and Annette Bardsley’s, River Farm, Staplehurst, Kent, had a decidedly optimistic air about it, following encouraging trials results, and enthusiasm for the coming marketing season.

Cameo has a number of features which are attractive to growers, including high yield potential, good storage life - leading to a long marketing season - and good eating quality. But the full marketing potential is not being realised at present because the selling desks have insufficient UK fruit to cover the whole season.

A major focus of development within the Cameo Club is the refining of the growing system to achieve the variety’s full potential and to encourage more growers to plant the variety to add to the volumes available.

The target, according to Nigel Bardsley, has to be consistently cropping at 40 tonne/ha, but one of Cameo’s traits has been a tendency to biennial cropping. This is now being overcome in both the UK and Germany by careful attention to effective thinning.

Blossom thinning seems to be essential, rather than waiting to thin fruitlets. Trials using the Darwin mechanical blossom thinner at River Farm have been giving encouraging results, with yields similar to hand-thinned trees at about 39 tonnes/ha and both having a Class 1 grade out of over 95%.

It was also noted that Darwin-thinned fruit had higher soluble solids and pressures. Usefully, Darwin thinning achieved a cost saving of 53% compared to hand thinning.

To achieve the most effective thinning using the Darwin machine, the trees must be pruned specifically to allow the machine to work most efficiently, explained Brian Tompsett, the Bardsleys’ Farms Manager.

Stiff branches thinned more readily than long weak wood. Tackling this has lead to the evaluation of the fruit wall system for growing Cameo, with some existing trees being converted with the aim of achieving a tree profile 80cm wide at the base and 40cm at the top. The initial winter pruning was followed by a summer cut at the six to eight leaf stage of development.

It was apparent, even in the first season of conversion, that mechanically pruned trees produced a much more uniform crop than conventionally pruned trees. The success of this has resulted in the Bardsleys expanding the conversion to fruit walls on some 10ha, which has included Rubens, Braeburn and Egremont Russet trees as well as Cameo.

The results this year were certainly impressive, but Brian Tompsett believes that more work is needed to get the timing of the annual early summer pruning right. This year the cut was
because of the vigorous growth, but even then there was significant re-growth, despite two applications of Cultar. This led to a trial of second pruning with cuts either three or two weeks before harvest, to help colour development and increase the laying down of fruit bud.

The timing of the cut on a vigorous variety like Cameo may benefit from being earlier, with some German work suggesting as early as pink bud or during blossom, which would have the added advantage of reducing the risk of damaging fruitlets. Regalis seems to be particularly effective on Cameo and could fit in with early pruning. Interestingly, when the Darwin thinner is combined with mechanical pruning it is estimated that a saving of up to £2000/ha can be achieved.

The Cameo Club does seem to be well on the way to producing consistent crops of Cameo with good size and colour. This will all be good news to Andy Sadler, Managing Director of Norman Collett Ltd, which is the master licence holder in the UK for Cameo and the sole selling desk.

Andy outlined the virtues of Cameo and said that German growers are now in a position to market Cameo from harvest through to July or August as a result of the variety’s excellent storage qualities, which is something he would like to be able to do in the UK, if there was enough fruit.

He stated that retail customers were pleased with Cameo and would like to stock more, as it gave customers a really good eating experience. These comments were confirmed by John Worth, Tesco’s Technical Manager for apples, who encouraged growers and marketing organisations to be more proactive in the promotion of good new varieties like Cameo and learn from the way that the Pink Lady consortium has promoted that variety.
Effective pear sucker control has almost become unachievable by conventional means for most growers, particularly when the weather favours the pest.

It is well known that broad spectrum insecticides exacerbate the problem because they kill the predators that can help solve it and, in any case, sucker is resistant to most of them.

The pest has caused growers enough trouble and expense to justify a four-year HortLINK project, partly to help them eliminate sucker without resorting to the use of predator-unfriendly insecticides, especially pyrethroids. The work involved has been funded by HDC and Defra and carried out by EMR entomologists Prof. Jerry Cross, Dr Michelle Fountain and their team.

The project’s findings, plus a description of sucker’s lifecycle and information about its predators, including how they are best encouraged, are given in the HDC’s Factsheet 28/12. This makes it clear that growers can achieve very good control of the pest by following the Factsheet’s recommendations.

A number of growers have already done just that. Among them is Oliver Doubleday of G. H. Dean and Company Ltd, who grows some 90ha of pears on Hempstead Farm and others in the Bapchild, Sittingbourne, Kent area. The age range of his orchards is from two to about 50 years old, the youngest 12ha being planted over the past few years on an intensive tabletop system at a spacing of 3.8m by 1.0m, except for the latest orchard comprising twin-stemmed trees that are 1.2m apart in the row.

“The HortLINK project is of great benefit,” declares Doubleday. “Sucker is a devastating problem, not least through its affect on pear decline, and there are cases of growers grubbing orchards due to [uncontrolled] sucker. The scale of the problem is very significant and the project has helped to find a better and more sustainable way forward, although there is no simple answer.”

Doubleday admits to having had a pear sucker problem, some orchards tending to have more ‘hot spots’ than others. But he and his Hempstead Farm Agri consultant Neil Franklin have found that by adopting the approach developed by Prof. Cross and Dr Fountain the pest is much more effectively controlled, although the heavy rain last summer helped.

“We have been using much less harsh chemicals – less is best – and have had good results with kaolin, particularly in one orchard where we applied it quite late in the season,” says Doubleday. “As a result [and allowing nettles to grow] we did a better job encouraging and retainingbeneficials. As part of the project’s recommendations, to attract sucker predators we have planted pussy willow and hazel hedgerows around our orchards and next time we plant we will ensure these species are close by,” he adds. “We won’t persecute nettles or encourage the over-killing of hedge bottoms,” he says. “I have a general view that an over-tidy, manicured farm is not a farm where wildlife gets much of a look in.”

He believes that the root pruning he introduced a few years ago to improve growth control might also help sucker control. Anything we can do to prevent the over-
The most effective approach to control sucker, Levett has been carrying out a trial at Child's Farm on three 4ha blocks. The first block received two Kaolin sprays, the first at budburst and then three weeks later, followed by an Envidor spray and then three introductions of Anthocoris adults. The second block received just Envidor and Anthocorids. The third block received the farm's normal programme of sulphur up to late white bud and then magnesium sulphate for the rest of the season.

The introduced Anthocoris augmented the natural population that had built up on nettles and pussy willow along the hedgerows. Anthocoris feed on the minute psyllids that colonise the nettles that are encouraged to grow in the alleys (mowed just once -

Lush growth the pest likes is potentially helpful, he says.

Neil Franklin maintains that the successful control of sucker requires the use of a combination of procedures. This season (2012) the result was very encouraging, the crop having had the best skin finish for many years, which should provide a high class I gradeout, and good quality fruit bud.

Arguably, the easiest of the project’s recommendations to implement was allowing nettles to grow under the trees and in the alleys “through less diligent weed control” and mowing less often – three times a year instead of five or six. Nettles, like pussy willow, hazel and hawthorn, are hosts of aphids and minute psyllids on which a number of sucker predators like Anthocoris nemoralis feed. “There were times last season when sucker numbers were building but they never exceeded the threshold where they caused a problem for the crop and fruit bud,” recalls Franklin.

Pear sucker had become a very serious problem on the 60.7ha of pears at David Long’s Childs Farm, Cooling, Kent. In the past the orchards had been sprayed with a wide range of insecticides to control pear sucker, to which the pest is now largely resistant. The main problem of this strategy is that the insecticides also killed the main predators of pear sucker, Anthocoris nemoralis and earwigs. Dr. Fountain’s recent work shows that spiders are also very important predators of pear sucker. With the predators seriously depleted at Child's Farm, the pest became virtually impossible to control.

As a result of this situation, Child’s Farm provided an ideal opportunity to put into practice a fully integrated pest management programme to get to grips with the problem. This has been done with the help of FAST fruit agronomist Chris Levett who, for the past two years, has based his sucker control strategy at Child's Farm on the HortLINK project’s main findings.

To determine
before picking), and also along the tree rows.

In the Anthocoris/Envidor block there were three Anthocoris introductions at 6,000 adults/ha, at six-week intervals. The first introduction was a few weeks after budburst, and all introductions were made where sucker egg numbers were highest, generally in the middles of the orchards. “This predator introduction approach did everything we wanted in the Anthocoris blocks,” claims Levett. “Sucker wasn’t an issue from budburst through to harvest and interestingly there didn’t appear to be any additional benefit from the Kaolin applications. The pears were of exceptional size and quality – with a very low level of russet”.

In the orchards without introduced Anthocorids, sucker numbers began to increase post blossom with honeydew being produced. To control this outbreak, Anthocorids adults were introduced in these orchards during May where sucker levels were increasing. “You can spot treat with Anthocoris when and where you’ve got a problem,” says Levett. “Within two to three weeks of the Anthocoris introduction, numbers of pear sucker eggs were reduced and the pest was back under control”.

“The cost of Anthocoris is £80 per introduction which would have been a fraction of the value of the loss of crop that is now up to 40 tonnes/ha in some orchards, compared with 12-15 tonnes/ha before we changed the sucker control strategy. What’s interesting is that, when the bins of pears were put into store, there was a mass of earwigs on the floor. These were swept up and returned to the orchards and so you could say they were being recycled,” reckons Levett.

Throughout the last two seasons the farm manager Mervin Fowler and two assistant’s monitored sucker and predator numbers on a weekly basis. Last year they found that earwigs numbers reached a maximum of six to ten per 30 branches beaten each week, compared with over 40 this year.

With just one generation of earwigs per year in the UK, this increase in the natural population is the result of the more predator-friendly strategy adopted at Child’s Farm in 2011.

Although Dr Fountain has found that earwigs have very healthy appetites for sucker eggs and nymphs, they did not appear in the Childs Farm orchards until towards the end of the season when their number increased very rapidly. Levett believes the reason for this was that the very high Anthocoris population seemed to suppress the earwigs by “being first in the buffet queue” until the Anthocoris migrated to their autumn/winter alternate hosts.

Csaba Nagy, another EMR entomologist, has made detailed observations of earwigs at night, when they are most active, which have shown that they are voracious predators of sucker and possibly even more important than Anthocoris.

Dr Fountain points out that Envidor is normally applied against sucker before young earwigs appear in the trees. “[Using the results of the HortLINK project] it’s quite taken me by surprise how quickly we’ve turned round the farm’s sucker problem [aided by the very wet April and June],” says Levett. “The fruit was as clean as a whistle – far better than I could have hoped for with very good yields across the farm”.

Next year he plans to drop the kaolin applications, thus saving around £120/ha, and instead introduce one dose of Anthocoris where sucker numbers justify it, and then wait to see whether any more introductions are necessary. If egg or nymph levels rise too quickly ahead of the predator, it may be necessary to spot treat just the ‘hot spots’ with Envidor to restore the balance of predator to pest. He will also advise leaving the orchards unmown again until August but keeping the herbicide strips cleaner to make picking easier.
Researchers aim to support increased UK blueberry production
writes Dr Julie Graham of the James Hutton Institute

Blueberry sales in the UK increased greatly last year but much of the demand is being met by imported fruit. However, a Horticulture LINK project, coordinated at the James Hutton Institute, aims to change that by supporting UK blueberry growers with new tools and knowledge.

Consumer demand for blueberries (Vaccinium spp.) is at record levels, partly due to their perceived health benefits, but also their convenience and flavour.

Blueberries account for 17% of fruit sales but it is estimated that only 3% of the blueberries purchased in the UK are grown here. Imports, primarily from Argentina, Chile, Spain and Poland, supply the significant shortfall.

However, this is beginning to change, with growers across the whole of the UK, from the south of England to the north of Scotland, beginning to produce blueberries. It is anticipated that the combination of this geographic spread, together with the temperate climate, will allow marketing of UK-grown blueberries from June to late October.

In the 2011 season, UK fresh sales recorded 60% growth, which amounts to around 20% of consumers in the UK purchasing blueberries. As the majority of the fruit is imported, there is a large potential demand for UK-grown blueberries and a clear opportunity for growers. The fruit category as a whole has one of the largest trade deficits of any imported commodity, and soft fruit can provide a secure, sustainable and healthy horticultural industry and food and drink sector for the UK.

The blueberry market saw increased growth to £140m in the last year, demonstrating enormous import substitution potential in season. Projections have indicated that a 50% rise in blueberry production is feasible with the development of premium and appropriate varieties and estimates suggest that every 1% increase in production would have a value of around £1 million.

In spite of a surge in production, insufficient studies have been conducted on blueberry growth and the suitability of varieties for the climatic variations across the UK, producing a disjointed picture.

This lack of knowledge of blueberry agronomy, and the adoption of American blueberry varieties, has created a sense of uncertainty among growers and potential investors. As with most fruit crops, blueberries require a long-term commitment. Plantations can take six to eight years to come into full production, but they can then remain in place for 30 years or more. This has significant environmental benefits by locking up carbon, minimizing soil disturbance and reducing the potential for soil erosion.

Blueberries require an average growing season of 160 days, and late spring or early autumn frost can damage plants. Blueberries grow better on very sandy soils and on soils high in organic matter, such as peat. Well drained acidic soil is critical for successful blueberry production, with pH between 4.2 and 5.0, and should have a low salt content. Continuous monitoring is necessary to avoid reducing the pH too much.

Blueberries have a shallow fibrous root system that cannot penetrate compacted soils and the lack of root hairs limits their absorptive capacity; and, as a result, the plant cannot tolerate drought and requires irrigation at times of water scarcity. Similarly, excess water applied to the root-zone induces hypoxia and might also increase root rot.

Cultivar knowledge needs to be developed across the UK, to define varieties in terms of establishment, growth characteristics, cropping season, fruit size, flavour, health benefits, machine-harvesting potential and resistance to major diseases. Leading varieties imported from elsewhere have often been shown not to be suitable for the UK season.

This lack of knowledge of both varieties and agronomy is being tackled by a consortium of UK stakeholders through a Horticulture LINK project, grant-funded by the Scottish Government and coordinated at the James Hutton Institute. This study aims to identify suitable varieties for growing across the UK, developing a financial model for grower confidence and generating a genetic framework for further improvement through modern breeding techniques.

Trait data, from a range of diverse cultivars planted at different locations and in open field as well as under polytunnels, will allow
Cultivar knowledge needs to be developed across the UK, to define varieties in terms of establishment, growth characteristics, cropping season, fruit size, flavour, health benefits, machine-harvesting potential and resistance to major diseases.

Genotype x environment effects to be determined. Characteristics being examined include establishment, agronomic traits (plant growth - height, spread, branch number and branch strength), seasonality, sensory characters, fruit composition (both fresh and processed), yield, fruit size, machine harvesting potential (for processing and also for fresh fruit, which would increase UK competitiveness against imported blueberries), as well as natural infection by Monilinia vaccinii-corymbosi (mummy berry), Godronia cassandrae (canker) and other diseases.

 Marketable crop yields for both fresh and processing markets, the timings of harvesting, and the fruit quality and character from machine-harvested fruit will be determined.

Establishment of blueberry varies widely across the UK and even at similar locations, so soil and water pH is being monitored and intact soil cores, taken from a range of farms, are being used to examine physical constraints from water and root mechanical impedance.

Sensory and phytochemical composition studies (including health-related compounds) will identify the range of desirable flavour, composition and appearance attributes that contribute to fruit quality and consumer appeal within the available germplasm.

As well as assessing germplasm, a genetic framework for future breeding is being developed in this study. This requires the construction of a genetic linkage map which represents the plant's chromosomes with markers as signposts along each. This can then be an invaluable tool for future breeding as, although some traits are controlled by one gene, most of the traits we are interested in are controlled by a number of different genes. These are known as complex or quantitative traits and can be located on the linkage map as Quantitative Trait Loci (QTL).

By locating these QTL to chromosomes and markers we can speed future breeding by quickly selecting whether the right trait has been passed to seedlings in a breeding programme.

To develop a genetic map, a mapping population has been developed from two key American blueberry cultivars, Liberty and Draper, at Michigan State University (MSU) and this population segregates for a number of key phenotypic traits and is being used at the James Hutton Institute in collaboration with MSU as the basis for linkage map development and QTL analysis of blueberry. Once the linkage map has been developed, we can proceed to QTL mapping of data from the key traits assessed in the project.

A socio-economic analysis is also being carried out to encourage investment in blueberry cultivation. Important aspects include a financial model based on the cost of pest and disease control, ability to machine-harvest and to grow across a wide season, and especially when few other blueberries are available worldwide. Other factors such as climate change, licensing arrangements and propagation are being considered.
Early de-leafing in grapes for yield control and wine quality improvement

An Italian research team has looked at the effectiveness of pre-bloom leaf removal as a way to meet limitations of yield/ha and to enhance grape and wine quality (Scientia Horticulturae).

The study over two vintages used high-yielding Italian red variety (Vitis vinifera L. Ciliegiolo). The pre-bloom de-leafing (removal of the first six basal leaves on each shoot) eliminated 75–80% of the leaves in the canopy, led to control of vine yield through lower fruit-set, lighter berries and less compact clusters than the non-defoliated treatment. It also reduced the incidence of Botrytis rot and improved the concentration of soluble solids and phenolics in the must.

According to vintage and degree of berry ripening at harvest, the Ciliegiolo wines from early-defoliated vines had enhanced aroma and flavour compared with wines from non-defoliated vines. The wines had improved structure (higher polyphenol content), better colour intensity (more anthocyanins) and more persistent and interesting olfactory and retro-olfactory assessments, as well as better aptitude to aging than those produced from non-defoliated vines.

Jonagold ripening quantified with and without 1-MCP

Researchers in Poland examined impacts of calcium chloride sprays on quality and Conference pear storability (Journal of Plant Nutrition).

A commercial orchard in central Poland of mature pear trees, planted on a coarse-textured soil with low organic matter status, optimal pH, and adequate macro and micronutrients was used in the trial. Two, four, or six sprays of calcium chloride were compared with the first treatment made six weeks after full bloom (the end of June), and the last two weeks before harvest. The rate of calcium chloride application depended on the tree growth stage; up to mid-July a dose of 2kg/ha was used, whereas in the later period 4kg/ha.

The unsprayed trees served as the control. Calcium chloride sprays did not affect fruit yield, mean fruit weight, fruit russetting, ground skin colour, soluble solids concentration, or titratable acidity of fruit at harvest.

In two out of five years of the study, pears sprayed six times with calcium chloride had increased firmness and decreased values of both starch index and Streif’s index at harvest. Only six sprays of calcium chloride enhanced pear calcium level. After storage (150 days at 0°C), apples were treated with 1-MCP, ethylene biosynthesis was almost completely suppressed throughout the whole post-harvest life, with the exception of the late harvested apples which regained some ethylene forming capacity after two weeks of shelf-life.

Changes in ethylene biosynthesis, respiration and firmness were studied during on-tree ripening, CA storage and shelf-life of Jonagold apples by Belgium researchers at University of Leuven (Postharvest Biology and Technology).

Particular attention was paid to the influence of harvest time on subsequent ripening during CA storage and shelf-life and on the effect of treatment with the ethylene inhibitor 1-MCP.

The influence of harvest time was most prominent on firmness, with late-harvested apples being significantly softer throughout the whole post-harvest life. Respiration rate was mainly influenced by the surrounding temperature and air conditions and, to a lesser extent, by the harvest time.

Ethylene production rate depended on harvest time but the effect disappeared upon movement from storage to shelf-life. When apples were treated with 1-MCP, ethylene biosynthesis was almost completely suppressed throughout the whole post-harvest life, with the exception of the late harvested apples which regained some ethylene forming capacity after two weeks of shelf-life.
The effect of reduced consumer spending

A comment from Hugh Lowe

The positive attitude shown in the trade press by growers, advisors, agronomists and academics who are involved in fruit production is very encouraging, especially as unseasonal weather and reduced consumer spending power have made the 2012 season difficult for many fruit growers.

The reports from farm walks, fruit shows and technical meetings show that they are looking ahead and that they continue to exchange ideas and adopt new techniques. This must be the right approach because one cannot make much progress if one does not confront the problems.

Defra’s recent publication of their “Food Statistics Pocketbook 2012” is timely and helpful, but not as helpful to fruit growers as it would have been if it had made more use of ex-farm prices, instead of retail prices only. This may be because the figures were intended to assess the proportion of household incomes spent on food, but it does little to address the effect of static or falling ex-farm prices on future supplies. Of course, increases in consumer spending on essentials, such as food, have important political and economic consequences and, if they are above the inflation rate, should be understood and dealt with, where possible.

Fruit is specifically mentioned, perhaps because of its contribution to the government’s “dietary health” policy, although the fact that retail prices for fruit are said to have increased between 2007 and 2011 at a faster rate than those for all food, could be misleading. Unfortunately, whatever has been happening to retail prices, ex-farm prices for home-grown fruit and vegetables have not increased by anything like as much, although the fact that the UK’s imports of fruit and vegetables exceed our exports by £7.2bn might explain some of this.

For further explanation, we probably should turn to Defra’s figures on Gross Value Added (GVA) to food costs, which contributed about £80bn to total retail prices paid by consumers in 2010. The GVA includes food manufacturing costs and the retailers’ costs and margins, although it does not say how much of this comes from the food manufacturers and how much of it is the retailers’ margin. In the case of fresh produce, I am inclined to think that the manufacturing part of the retail price is less than for other foods, such as bread or ready meals and, although there are no specific figures for fresh produce, the fact that ‘agriculture and fishing’ accounts for only £7.5bn of the total of £39.1bn spent on food in the UK, this could be the reason why ex-farm prices for fruit and vegetables are so much lower than retail prices.

Obviously, a considerable proportion of this is spent on ‘food manufacturing’ but not in the case of home-grown fresh fruit, especially soft fruit, most of which goes ready packed, either via a wholesaler, or directly to the retailer. To take an obvious example, farm gate strawberry prices in 2012 have been at their lowest for several years.

Of course, the retailers have to run profitable businesses and the more fresh produce they can sell, the less they need to load their prices with margins so, perhaps, the answer is to try to make our products more appealing. Fresh fruit should be always available in season, it should look good and taste good and it should be priced at an affordable level.

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It is not surprising that it is the lower income groups who are not taking advantage of cheaper fruit and the health benefits which it confers, so it may be that, if we are to increase consumption, it will need to be done in a way that appeals to this group of consumers. For growers who are under pressure, aiming for lower production costs is always important, but this might be counter productive if quality is compromised so that it discourages the new consumers or those who are already regular buyers, who look forward to strawberries as being the ‘affordable treat’ which I have mentioned in the past.

In my view, growers who are considering ways of reducing their production costs should keep an eye on some of the new varieties which have been, or soon will be, released by the various plant-breeding programmes which are available to us. Some of the new strawberry varieties look as if they will have good yields, a highly rated flavour and higher percentages of Class 1 fruit in the 35-45mm size range. Based on this alone, some of these new varieties should be cheaper to grow and pick - my choice is EM1764, soon to be named Centenary, although I’m sure there will be others which will keep us up to speed.
The pesticide stewardship initiative that’s put the future of the insecticide chlorpyrifos in the hands of growers and spray operators, has bought invaluable time, says the consortium behind the campaign.

“A year ago we were on the brink of seeing this valued treatment disappear entirely from the crop protection market,” says Steve Norman of Dow AgroSciences, one of the three approval holder companies that launched Chlorpyrifos: Say NO to DRIFT in December 2011. “It was a situation that demanded an immediate response from growers across the agricultural and horticultural sectors that were given a clear message of ‘no drift’ or ‘no chlorpyrifos’. And it’s a challenge that was embraced wholeheartedly through 2012.”

Unlike the arable and vegetable sectors who, in many instances, already used low-drift nozzles, the change in practice was absolute for the fruit sector, who switched to low-drift nozzles from a baseline use of almost zero.

Bob Chaplin from the National Association of Cider Makers (NACM) insists that the protection of chlorpyrifos is vital. “We need to protect what we’ve got; chlorpyrifos is the only treatment we have against persistent pests such as Apple Blossom Weevil and we need to do what we can to maintain our use of it”.

He adds that, because the switch to low-drift nozzles meant a complete change in practice for the orchard fruit sector, there was an element of scepticism from cider growers to begin with. “There was concern that the nozzles wouldn’t produce the right size droplet to ensure the spray reaches the top of the cider fruit trees”.

To help communicate techniques to optimise results, the Say NO to DRIFT campaign organised orchard spraying events in Herefordshire and Somerset. “The day I attended in Somerset proved to be a huge success,” said Bob. “We set our sprayers up with different combinations of low-drift nozzles and demonstrated their effectiveness by placing litmus paper in the upper branches of the tree. Everyone left feeling confident that low-drift nozzles were capable of performing just as well as the conventional ones and were reassured that this was the solution to safeguarding the use of chlorpyrifos”.

A DEFRA survey is currently assessing the levels of actual uptake of the new measures adopted for applications of the insecticide this year – measures that will deliver the necessary compliance with more stringent regulatory requirements. But Steve is confident that the high levels of support experienced throughout the campaign, will be in evidence.

“We have witnessed a united and concerted effort and change in practices towards wholesale adoption of low drift nozzles for the wide-ranging uses of the insecticide,” he reports. “And these were all measures undertaken voluntarily across the fruit sector”.

Rob Collins, a grower from Herefordshire, explained that, following his local event, and contrary to some opinions, there was a clear consensus of being reassured that low-drift nozzles were the way forward. We conducted our own tests and found that, providing the pressure is set high, the nozzles prove very effective”. He added, “Although the spray is less fine than the conventional ATR nozzles, the droplets will reach the same height. 

When asked if he plans to continue using low drift nozzles Rob answered that he will, without question. “In the early part of the season and whenever we’re spraying Chlorpyrifos we will use low drift nozzles. Chlorpyrifos is really the only tool in our pest control armoury and we have to protect it. The use of low drift nozzles is a simple effective way to maintain our use of this treatment”.

Steve Norman explains that the new application guidelines went together with a forceful message to users, advisers and the wider industry, of the imperative to adopt the new measures, or face losing access to the product. “The nozzles present a chance to retain chlorpyrifos. This insecticide is of great agronomic value, which really provided the motivation to look at what could be done to secure its future,” notes Steve. He adds that the entirely unprecedented approach that’s been taken with this campaign shouldn’t be underestimated. “Low-drift nozzles don’t currently form any part of the regulatory decisions for the future availability of crop protection products in UK, so this could be a landmark case”. To register your support for the campaign visit www.saynotodrift.co.uk

Although the spray is less fine than the conventional ATR nozzles, the droplets will reach the same height.
Horticulture Sector Board Members

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The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) is looking for both expert and independent Horticulture Sector Board Members to support the on-going development of the Horticultural Development Company (HDC), the horticultural division of AHDB. AHDB is funded by farmers and growers and others in the supply chain through the collection of statutory financial levies.

Sector Board Members assist the Chair (Mr Neil Bragg) and the HDC executive in developing strategies, managing the financial position and ensuring effective governance. Industry specialists will need to play an active role in their sector and command the respect of their peers. Independent members will need to demonstrate an interest in, and empathy with, the agriculture and horticultural sectors together with a wider external perspective.

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