Integrated Fruit Production and You

Located in the spectacular Columbia River Gorge, The Dalles' cherry production area is surrounded by snow-covered mountains and flowing rivers. In the midst of this beauty, it is easy to understand why Mid-Columbia cherry growers desire to preserve this environment for future generations.

The Mid-Columbia cherry IFP program is patterned after a program developed in the South Tyrol Valley of northern Italy. Nestled among the jutting peaks of the Alps, orchardists farm 40,000 acres of beautiful alpine valleys. Through the IFP program, Tyrolean orchardists are determined to maintain the pristine nature of their environment. Similarly, Mid-Columbia growers are resolved to maintain the environment in which they and their children live.

What is IFP?

An Integrated Fruit Production program gives preference to environmental concerns in the production of high quality cherries. IFP is more than just sound pest management. It is a program that takes into account all phases of fruit production, from planting a new orchard to controlling pests to the quality of fruit delivered.

How has IFP made a difference?

Although the Mid-Columbia IFP program was officially implemented in 1998, growers have been making significant changes in farming practices for several years to prepare for the IFP program. The following list outlines several of the most significant changes:

- Irrigation was applied to orchards in response to soil moisture levels. In 1997 and 1998 this had the effect of delaying the irrigation cycle by approximately one month. Proper irrigation deterred nutrient leaching and runoff, while trees appeared notably healthier.
- In the last ten years, fertilizer applications have been cut nearly in half as growers began applying nutrients only as needed and in limited quantities per application to reduce leaching and runoff.
- Vegetation-free zones under trees are being reduced as grass is allowed to return, thus reducing soil erosion.
- Growers are applying pesticides only when needed, based upon actual insect populations within orchards. Growers and fieldmen have learned to scout orchards to determine pest population densities.
- Growers are using softer, environmentally friendly chemicals to control pests. A
major shift has been made away from harsh chemicals such as pyrethroids to softer chemicals such as B.t.s that are extremely safe to the environment, applicators and the community.

**Why is IFP important to you?**

We should all be concerned for our environment. We live in a world that is under attack from many directions. As citizens of the world, it is our responsibility to maintain it and preserve it for future generations.

As growers we are also concerned about our health and the health of our children. We have grown cherries in and around The Dalles for generations and desire the same lifestyle for our children and our children's children. Using softer chemicals, applying them only when needed and limiting fertilizer runoff and erosion are some of the steps we are taking to improve our environment, make our foods safer and our world healthier.