Survey of New England Apple **Growers On Using Sanitation and Delaying Early-season Fungicide Applications**

Renae Moran¹, Glen Koehler¹, Cheryl Smith², George Hamilton², William MacHardy², Lorraine Berkett³, Heather Faubert⁴, Mary Concklin⁵, Arthur Tuttle⁶, Jon **Clements⁶ and Daniel Coolev⁶**

¹University of Maine; ²University of New Hampshire; ³University of Vermont; ⁴University of Rhode Island; ⁵University of Connecticut; ⁶University of Massachusetts

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Respondents

A survey was conducted in spring 2012 to learn about the extent to which New England apple growers know about and use sanitation and scab assessment methods that can reduce scab inoculum and in some cases allow them to eliminate very early fungicide applications. Growers were asked 11 questions using SurveyMonkey®, an online survey conducting program. Growers in Maine received an email invitation May 2 to take the survey, and growers in New Hampshire and Massachusetts received the same email invitation May 7. A reminder was sent June 1 to growers who had not yet completed the survey. Growers in Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut were invited to take the survey via a weblink, which was sent to them by email. Twentyfive growers in Maine received the survey by regular mail with five (20%) returning completed surveys by mail. By July 11, a total of 507 growers were invited to

take the survey and 115 (23%) had responded.

Farm Size

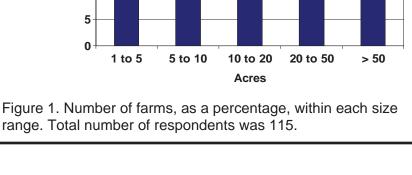
Farm size ranged from 1 acre to over 50 acres. The number of acres represented was estimated to be 3170, based on the number of farms within each size category and the average farm size within each category. Farms greater than 50 acres were estimated to be 100 acres in size. Most farms were less than 10 acres, accounting for 52% of the farms in the survey (Figure 1).

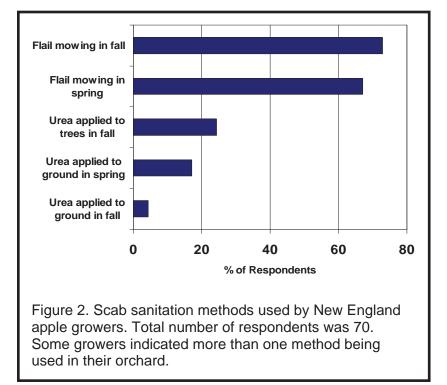
The relative number of midsized farms, or those farms that were 10 to 50 acres in size, accounted for 30%, and large farms represented the smallest sector accounting for less than 20%.

Sanitation

Growers were asked if they had used any sanitation method for scab reduction in their orchard. The majority, 67%, indicated that they had used some method of sanitation in their orchards. Growers who responded yes to this question were asked to indicate the number of acres on which they used sanitation in recent years. The estimated proportion of the total acres in the survey on which growers used sanitation was 41%, or 1300 acres. Growers who used sanitation did not use it on the entire orchard, but on an estimated 77% of their production







acres.

Of the 70 growers who used santiation, the most common method was flail mowing in spring or fall, with 94% mowing once during either time and 46% respondents flail mowing in both spring and fall. Applying urea was used by 40% either directly to trees in fall or to the to the ground in spring. Few growers, 4%, applied it to the ground in fall.

Thirty-three percent of the growers indicated that they did not use sanitation in their orchards. The most common reasons for not using sanitation was not possessing a flail mower, indicated by 54%, and lack of time when it needed to be performed, indicated by 46%. Only 16% indicated that they did not know enough about scab sanitation to use it effectively.

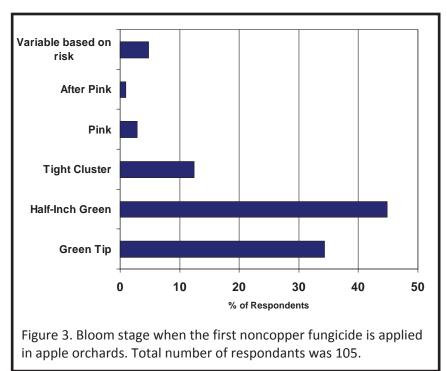
Scab Indexing

The scab index, or potential ascospore dose (PAD), which is measured by counting the number of shoots that have scab in September or October, was not used as frequently as sanitation. Only 15% of growers surveyed indicated that they routinely do a scab index. Lack of time when it needed to be done was the most common reason, indicated by 37% of respondents, followed by not knowing how to do an index, indicated by 36%. Twenty-four percent indicated that scab indexing was not done because they will not delay the use of fungicides in spring. Four percent of growers indicated that they did not do indexing because their varieties were resistant to scab, and therefore an index was not needed.

Growers who measure the scab index do so to determine if they can save time and money by delaying the first fungicide application, or to measure the level of scab risk in their orchards as a way to more effectively manage the disease.

Delaying the First Fungicide

Since copper is applied as a fertilizer and for fireblight management, growers were asked when the first non-copper fungicide was applied. Most growers, 79%, apply the first non-copper fungicide at either green tip, or at half-inch green. Sixteen percent indicated that they apply their first scab fungicide at tight cluster or



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Urea applied to the ground in fall. 4% Urea applied to the ground in spring. 17% Answered question: 70. Skipped questions: 45 7. Please, indicate which of the following describes the use of fall scab indexing (PAD assessment) in your orchard (select all that apply): 1 do not know how to do a fall scab index. 36% 1 grow varieties with good resistance to scab and therefore do not need it. 4% 1 grow varieties with good resistance to scab and therefore do not need it. 4% 1 grow varieties with good resistance to scab and therefore do not need it. 4% 1 grow varieties with good resistance to scab and therefore do not need it. 4% 1 aro not confident that my scab index would be accurate. 19% 1 have no time in September to do a scab index. 37% Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 8 Which of the following describes your reasons for doing a scab index (select all that apply): Respons To determine if 1 can save time and money by delaying the first scab fungicide next spring. 11% 1 the scab level is high, 1 want to figure out why, do sanitation measures, and give priority to that block for scab control next spring. 22% 1 do not perform a scab index in my orchards. 68% Answered question: 9.4 Skipped question: 21. 9. When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Respons Green Tip After pink 3% 1 Timing is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after in at least one orchard. 35% 1 Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 1 Select all of the following statements that you agree with: 8 cespons row row and the scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too high. 1'd rather spray more than risk scab. 10. 1 Select all of the following statements that you agree with: 8 cespons 1 do not the following statements that you agree with: 8 cespons 1 do not the following statements that you agree with: 8 cespons 1 do not the following statements that you agree with: 8			
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Answered question: 70. Skipped questions: 45 7. Please, indicate which of the following describes the use of <u>fall scab indexing</u> (PAD assessment) in your orchard (select all that apply): I do not know how to do a fall scab index. Jarow varieties with good resistance to scab and therefore do not need it. 4% I are not confident that my scab index would be accurate. 19% I have no time in September to do a scab index. 37% I have no time in September to do a scab index. 37% I will not use a delayed first syrary strategy the next spring, so there is no gain from doing it. 244% Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 8 Which of the following describes your reasons for doing a scab index (select all that apply): Respons To determine if I can save time and money by delaying the first scab fungicide next spring. 11% If the scab level is high, 1 want to figure out why, do sanitation measures, and give priority to that block for scab control next spring. 12% I do not perform a scab index in my orchards. 68% Answered question: 94. Skipped question: 21. 9 When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Respons Green Tip 9 When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Respons After pink 11% I for scab level on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after in at least one orchard is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after in at least one software question: 10. 12% Pink 13% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14% 14			
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8. Which of the following describes your reasons for doing a scab index (select all that apply): Response To determine if I can save time and money by delaying the first scab fungicide next spring. 11% If the scab level is high, I want to figure out why, do sanitation measures, and give priority to that block for scab control next spring. 22% It is worth it to have a measure of the scab level in the orchard, whether or not I am going to delay the first scab fungicide next spring. 22% I do not perform a scab index in my orchards. 68% Answered question: 94. Skipped question: 21. 9 9. When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Response Green Tip 34% Half-inch Green 12% Timing is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after in at least one or orchard. 5% Pink 3% Alter pink 3% Without a scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too high. I'd rather spray more than risk scab. 24% I don't control scab well enough as it, so cutting back is not an option. 24% Pink is higher puts too much pressure on the first spray. 38% Alter pink 35% Without a scab index a			
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It is worth it to have a measure of the scab level in the orchard, whether or not I am going to delay the first scab fungicide next spring. 22% Answered question: 94. Skipped question: 21. 9. When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Green Tip 134% Half-inch Green 110 Pink After pink 11% Timing is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after in at least one orchard. Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 10. Select all of the following statements that you agree with: Response Without a scab index for the previous fail, the risk of scab infection from green tip to half-inch green is too high to leave green tisse unprotected. Even if I had done a fall scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too high. I'd rather spray more than risk scab. 14 dor first scab spray is typically applied at or after the tight cluster bud state wenes to scab. 15 done to first scab spray is typically applied at or after the tight cluster bud state wenes to scab. 16 mether years were as a lowed praying system. Delaying the first spray to a later growth stage when scab risk is higher puts too much pressure on the first spray. 17 mether stors years years as a to fit he spraying system. Delaying the first scab fungicide spray in low scab risk orchards (select all that apply). 17 merianing in scab sanitation and in doing a fall scab index. 13 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. 13 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 14 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 14 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 14 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 14 % 0 Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 15 %		t block for scab	22%
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Answered question: 94. Skipped question: 21. 9. When do you normally plan to make your first fungicide application, excluding copper, in blocks that had good scab control last year? Green Tip 34% Half-inch Green 45% Pink 37% Pink 37% After pink 37% After pink 38% After pink 30% Answered question: 10. 31% Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 31% Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 35% Distribution of the following statements that you agree with: 35% New fir had done a fall scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too high. 1'd rather spray more than risk scab. 35% The first scab spray is typically applied at or after the tight cluster bud stage in our orchards that have a lower risk of scab. 38% Answered question: 99. Skipped question: 16. 38% Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. 37% Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. 37% Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. 37% Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. 31%			68%
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Lam not interested in delaying the first scale spray	 good scab control last year? Green Tip Half-inch Green Tight Cluster Pink After pink Timing is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after orchard. Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 10. Select all of the following statements that you agree with: Without a scab index from the previous fall, the risk of scab in fection from green tip to half-inch in leave green tissue unprotected. Even if I had done a fall scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too hig more than risk scab. I don't control scab well enough as it is, so cutting back is not an option. The first spray serves as a test of the spraying system. Delaying the first spray to a later growth st is higher puts too much pressure on the first spray. The first scab spray is typically applied at or after the tight cluster bud stage in our orchards that scab. Answered question: 90. Skipped question: 16. 11. Which of the following might help you consider delaying the first scab fungicide spray in low orchards (select all that apply). Training in scab sanitation and in doing a fall scab index. Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. 	green is too high to (h. I'd rather spray age when scab risk have a lower risk of	35% 54% 24% 38% 23% Response 37% 40%
I am not interested in delaying the first scab spray. 26% Answered question: 98. Skipped question: 17.	good scab control last year? Green Tip Half-inch Green Tight Cluster Pink After pink Timing is based on the risk of scab in each orchard, but is regularly delayed to tight cluster or after orchard. Answered question: 105. Skipped question: 10. 10. Select all of the following statements that you agree with: Without a scab index from the previous fall, the risk of scab infection from green tip to half-inch gleave green tissue unprotected. Even if 1 had done a fall scab index and found a low amount of scab, the risk of scab is still too hig more than risk scab. I don't control scab well enough as it is, so cutting back is not an option. The first spray serves as a test of the spraying system. Delaying the first spray to a later growth st is higher puts too much pressure on the first spray. The first scab spray is typically applied at or after the tight cluster bud stage in our orchards that scab. Answered question: 99. Skipped question: 16. 11. Which of the following might help you consider delaying the first scab fungicide spray in low orchards. Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. Demonstration of delayed first spray in grower orchards. Demonstration of delayed first spray in a university research orchard. Access to disease model forecasts for timing and relative sevently of primary scab infection perior <td>green is too high to h. I'd rather spray age when scab risk have a lower risk of w scab risk</td> <td>35% 54% 24% 38% 23% Response 37% 40% 31% 48%</td>	green is too high to h. I'd rather spray age when scab risk have a lower risk of w scab risk	35% 54% 24% 38% 23% Response 37% 40% 31% 48%

later, and an additional 5% time the first fungicide based on the risk of scab infection in each orchard block, but typically delay it until tight cluster or later in at least one orchard. A few growers selected more than one stage indicating that the answer may vary according to scab risk in each block.

Delaying fungicide use was considered too risky by 53% of respondents. Twenty-five percent indicated that they were not interested in delaying fungicide, but 75% indicated that they would consider delaying fungicide use with additional demonstration of its effectiveness and training in methods that reduce scab risk such as sanitation and measuring the scab index or PAD.

Summary

About 20% of the apple growers contacted to do this survey supplied information on the use of sanitation and elimination of early fungicide applications for apple scab in New England. Most of these growers currently practice scab sanitation as a routine cultural practice on at least part of their orchards. However, less than half the apple acreage represented in the survey received sanitation. Assessing scab inoculum potential using a formal PAD index is practiced less frequently due to a lack of time, or because of perceived risks of delaying the earliest fungicide applications. About half of the growers said that the risk of scab was too high, even in a clean block, for them to consider delaying. Nearly 80% normally plan to apply a fungicide by half-inch green even in blocks with good scab control the previous year. While about 25% of the growers would not consider delaying sprays, the remaining 75% would, given further training in using and demonstration of the effectiveness of the methods.

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