

Purshade protects Washington apples

Carl Collen | 09 June 2010

Topfruit grower in US Pacific Northwest experiences 'significant decreases' in sunburn damage after adopting Purfresh product

Food and water protection and preservation company Purfresh has announced that a US apple and pear grower based in Washington state has achieved a reduction in sunburn damage on fruit following the adoption of a solar plant protectant.



Cowan Orchards experienced 'significant decreases' in physical damage after using Purshade-O on a number of different apple varieties, including galas, braeburns, red delicious and cameos.

The Purshade product has been engineered to provide superior protection against the effects of solar stress, Purfresh said, reflecting harmful wavelengths of solar radiation such as ultraviolet and infrared light, while allowing transmissions of sufficient sunlight for photosynthesis.

"I have tried other products in the past, but no other product has provided the flexibility, performance, and usability of Purshade-O," said Robert Cowan, owner of Cowan Orchards. "Purshade-O is easy to mix, apply, and remove. It doesn't cover the natural colour or interfere with colour picking, it leaves minimal residue, and can be used on both conventional and organic crops.

"The Pacific Northwest is a very harsh environment to grow apples, and we can't afford to lose any production to solar stress," he added. "I'll be using Purshade again this season."

The impact of solar stress on apples has been widely studied, with sunburn-related cullage rates in the US averaging 10-25 per cent and costing the industry over US\$100m each year.

"Organic growers face unique challenges in protecting their crops — and in many cases, they have fewer options for crop protection or are forced to use less effective products. Not so with Purshade-O," said Tom Justmann, general manager, plant health group for Purfresh.

"We designed our Purshade-O product to provide the same level of protection as our conventional Purshade, but in an OMRI certified formulation," he noted. "In the case of Cowan Orchards, Purshade-O not only met his needs for solar protection, it also enabled him to simplify his crop management program by using only one product to protect his entire orchard."