

## NOTES ON THE USE OF ETHREL C FOR RIPENING FRUIT

Full Off-label approval has now been granted for the use of Ethrel C as a plant growth regulator spray for ripening cider apples.

Ethrel C spray releases ethylene gas which accelerates the ripening of fruit. This is produced naturally during normal fruit maturation.

Ethrel spray can advance fruit drop by about 2 weeks. This is dependant on the weather and can be slower in cold, wet conditions. Treatment can help to synchronise drop in varieties which normally fall or shake over a prolonged period, eg. Browns Apple.

Fruit ripened this way will still contain about the same level of sugar as naturally matured fruit. There seems to be little effect on subsequent fermentation.

### Spray timing

Ethrel works best when sprayed during warm, dry weather, 2 - 3 weeks before the anticipated fruit collection.

For example, Browns Apple is normally shakeable after the first week of October. Apply Ethrel C around the 14th of September to anticipate a complete drop by the end of September.

### Improving spray activity-

Ethrel C works best in slightly acidic solution. In hard water areas the addition of a buffer such as Seniphos can help. Results during cold, wet weather may also be improved.

### Cost

At 1997 price of Ethrel C @ £100/500ml, and pH buffer additive at around £30/l  
Approximate costs will be £36/acre plus £5 if a buffer is used.

### POTENTIAL SAVINGS

As much as 5% of a 20TPA Browns Apple crop can be lost through rotting prior to final harvest. Tip bearing spurs and branches are often broken as a result of heavy shaking needed to dislodge slightly immature fruit. Some flower bud may be lost as a result.

With a synchronous drop, all the fruit can be harvested in one operation and without spur damage or build-up of rots on the ground.

At a price of £95/tonne, 5% of a 20 tonne crop lost is equivalent to £95 loss per acre. More than enough to cover the cost of a successful Ethrel spray.

### NB

Always follow the label instructions.

Liz Copas  
NACM  
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