



Cutting Edge / Snykant

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Monitoring Fruit flies in 2005

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Last season, a number of citrus growers in different parts of the country had unusually high numbers of male fruit flies in Sensus-Capilure traps but no females in Sensus-Questlure traps and no signs of fruit being stung. Due to earlier recommendations that numbers of male flies exceeding four per week in Sensus-Capilure traps indicated inadequate fruit fly control, a workshop was held in February in the Western Cape to discuss this issue. The recommendations resulting from the workshop and further discussion with experts in the northern citrus production regions, have resulted in modifications to the previous recommendations on monitoring.

As several large citrus estates have been managing fruit fly successfully for many years while monitoring with Capilure in Sensus traps, they should have the opportunity to continue this approach using the previously established threshold of four flies per trap per week, i.e., five or more flies indicates inadequate control. Control measures are more effective against female fruit flies than males so growers in situations where high numbers of fruit flies are entering citrus orchards from other crops may not be able to maintain Sensus-Capilure catches at four or below per week. These growers should rather monitor fruit flies with Sensus-Questlure traps to determine whether their control of the female flies is adequate. The Sensus-Questlure combination catches both female and male fruit flies so can also be influenced to a lesser extent by high numbers of males. It is therefore necessary to base the threshold on female flies and use more than one female per Sensus-Questlure trap per week as the indication of inadequate fruit fly control.

The choice of lure type will be left to the grower. If past experience shows that fly numbers can be maintained at or below the Sensus-Capilure threshold, then all trap-lure combinations can be of this type. If this is not the case, all traps must be changed to Sensus-Questlure traps. The number of traps to be used per hectare remains the same, irrespective of the type used, at approximately one trap per three hectares, or sufficient traps to ensure adequate monitoring.

Citrus growers should consider using an aerial bait application early in the season to lower fruit fly numbers over a large area. Thereafter, ground baiting with organophosphates plus protein hydrolysate, or GF-120 (spinosad) can be used, or M3 bait stations. An update on treatment options for the control of fruit fly will be circulated in the near future.