

June 15, 2006



## **Murray Valley Citrus Board**

### **Considerations for Growers During Extreme Frost Conditions.**

#### **Prior to frost:**

1. install temperature data logger to low lying areas set at  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 4 hours (critical temperature threshold for injury) with a frost alarm.
2. monitor weather forecasts for potentially damaging frosts.
3. weed free, compact, moist soil to maximize heat stored during the day.
4. lightly irrigate – full cover irrigation will give up to  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$  more soil temperature than drip.
5. use overhead sprays for mechanical control.

#### **What to do after a frost:**

1. **assess damage as early as possible** in the morning, no later than midday.
2. alternatively check 1 to 2 days later by their water soaked appearance on the inside of the fruit.
3. sample fruit from the lower part of the tree.
4. sample fruit that is exposed on the outside of the tree.
5. check foliage for any visual burning.
6. cut the top  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the fruit and continue slicing looking for any frozen tissue.
7. sample 20 to 30 fruit and if 4-6 have frozen tissue then suspend harvest to this area.
8. record your observation, temperature and damaged fruit.
9. **talk to your packer to alert of the injury.**
10. **develop an alternative harvest strategy in conjunction with packer.**
11. re sample in 7 to 10 days using the above method.

#### **Comment:**

All industry stakeholders need to be vigilant and responsible with their appraisals of fruit during this period of extreme conditions, as filtering in damaged fruit to our markets will only create unnecessary pressure on our whole industry.