

Welcome to Spring, 2001
Dr Trevor Atkins, HortPlus Ltd
Email: trevor.atkins@hortplus.com
Web site: www.hortplus.com

Over the winter months Weather Sense is focused on winter chilling. The following arrived via email from Hans Kuiper the illustrious editor of The Orchardist - let's give him the final word on the topic!

*"Winter chilling
Is thrilling;
We proceed by degrees
Until we freeze."*

With the arrival of Spring it is back to planning for and implenting disease control methods - the apple orchards in particular in high gear just now. This month we focus on Blackspot across the country:

- We use the HortPlus MetWatch software to estimate Mill's Periods (when conditions are conducive for infection) based on weather data from weather stations in the national network.
- We use the HortPlus Ascospore Release software to estimate timing and amount of ascospore release, again based on weather station data. The Ascospore Release software is based on a very clever model developed by HortResearch's Dr Robert Beresford that can be used to replace the traditional and laborious glass slide monitoring methods.

Figure 1 illustrates the results of these analyses (see figure title for explanation of how to read for Mill's Period severity and ascospore release information). Note that the Mills Periods are estimated with a 6-hour canopy drying time.

A cursory look at this figure shows why growers in Central Otago sound so relaxed when you talk to them just now! Growers in other regions though have mostly had significant release events that have coincided with Mills Periods. These graphs tell an interesting story, and are worth taking some time to digest. While it is still early in the season, there have already been some notable disease events. Watch this space to see how the season continues to develop - unless of course you are running MetWatch yourself or have subscribed to the new Fruited WeatherEye fax/email service!

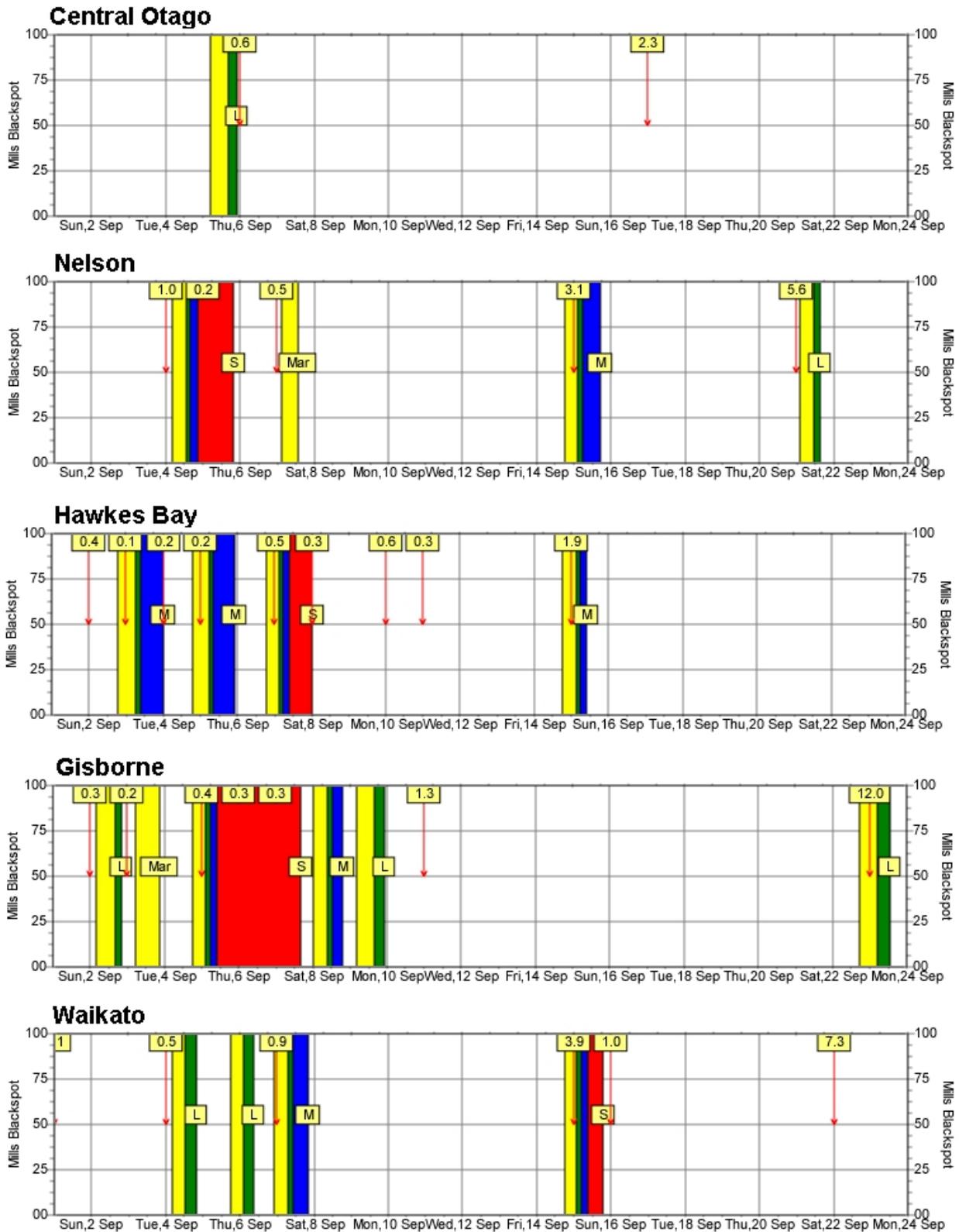


Figure 1. Blackspot risk around the country: Mill's Periods estimated with the HortPlus MetWatch software, and ascospore release events estimated with the HortPlus Ascospore Release software. (Numbers at top of each graph in yellow square are % of total ascospores on an orchard released in any given release event. Coloured bars indicate severity of a Mills Period: L-light; Mar-marginal; M-moderate; S - severe).