

Organic Fruit and Vegetable Workshop

Wednesday, February 19, 2014

8:30am “Organic peach tree and root growth in response to understory and fertility management”, Mae Culumber, Utah State University

This session will describe commonly encountered soil quality and fertility problems facing Utah orchard growers, as well as explain the organic and conventional orchard management trials being conducted at the USU Agricultural Experiment Station in Kaysville, Utah. Fertility management program and novel understory management techniques will be covered. Lastly, it will be shown how the management practices have influenced tree growth from establishment, which provides an indicator of future tree productivity.

9:15am “Arthropod and weed management in organic peach systems”, Andrew Tebeau, Utah State University

10:30am “Organic fruit production from a grower perspective”, Steve Ela, Ela Family Farms, Hotchkiss, CO

Organic fruit growing involves viewing the orchard system as a system involving trees, cover crops, weeds, fertility, insect and disease management, crop load, variety selection, pruning, irrigation, and marketing. Producing high quality, certified organic fruit, involves managing this system in order to gain the maximum benefit from natural processes while controlling destructive insects and diseases.

11:15am “Consumer preferences and willingness to pay for differentiated peaches”, Kynda Curtis, Utah State University

1:30pm “Organic bramble production: management ideas based on research findings”, Dr. Bernadine Strik, Oregon State University

Dr. Strik has been conducting production systems research trials on certified organic blackberry and blueberry planting for 7 years. While this presentation will focus on what has been learned in organic blackberry production systems, information learned from other trials/crops and from commercial growers will be highlighted, including: planting establishment, cultivator adaptation to organic systems, weed management, and pest management.

2:15pm “Organic greenhouse vegetable production from a grower perspective”, Jerry Harris, Castle Valley Farms, Moab, UT

This presentation will cover a simple method of using alfalfa pellets to meet the nutritional needs of an organic tomato crop under greenhouse production. It will also include a discussion on insect and disease challenges, temperature control, pruning and training, tomato varieties and harvest methods.

3:30pm “USU Organic Vegetable Research Update”, Dr. Dan Drost, Utah State University

This presentation will discuss projects that directly or indirectly relate to organic production systems for vegetables. Ideally, to assess organic production practices, the changes made need to be evaluated over long time periods. We are presently in the 5th year of a research project that is evaluating the long-term effects of different winter-summer cover crops (CC) on the growth and productivity of selected vegetables. What effect do these CC combinations have on stand establishment, plant growth and

development, productivity levels, weed pressure, and other crop related parameters? Are there specific combinations that are better than others? What other issues need to be addressed? The latest findings and a summary of past results will be presented and discussed.