



WILBUR-ELLIS®

Wilbur Ellis Cashmere, WA

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WILBUR-ELLIS®

Introduction

Wilbur-Ellis is a large company that sells chemicals for agricultural and horticultural use. These chemicals range from pesticides to fertilizers. The company provides services and products that can maximize the profit for the grower. Some of these services include: checking codling moth traps, delivering fertilizers, making application recommendations for pesticides, and helping with decision making for the crop. There are many companies that try to help the grower out in the same ways but Wilbur-Ellis is one of the leading companies in this industry.

Job Description

During this internship I was assigned numerous tasks which broadened my range of learning. These tasks included checking codling moth traps in apple and pear orchards, assisting in research of new chemicals, and job shadowing fieldmen. The codling moth trap monitoring consisted of checking traps and reporting back how many moths were in each trap. This had to be done in a timely manner so that the fieldman could develop an integrated pest management plan, along with writing spray recommendations. Codling moths cause a lot of damage to a crop because the larvae tend to burrow into fruit which makes it unmarketable. This can greatly decrease the profit for the grower.

During my internship we set up a new computer program to aid in recording the trap counts. I was placed in charge of placing barcodes on all traps so that they could be scanned, and correlated with the data. Once the trap was scanned, the information was automatically sent to the grower and the specific fieldman to analyze the data.

While assisting in research, I was able to learn many of the ongoing problems that the tree fruit industry faces today. One example of current research I helped out with was the application of chemicals to reduce cherry cracking. Cherry cracking occurs after rain because the water lands in the bowl of the cherry which is then absorbed into the flesh. Too much water in the cherry leads to cracking of the skin. Field plots were set up and evaluated after the chemicals were applied following a rain storm. This was observed after rain to determine if cracking was reduced significantly. I aided in finding valuable information that will help fieldmen write recommendations to reduce the amount of cherry cracking. Lastly, when all other tasks were completed, I was able to ride along with fieldmen to observe everyday operations. This is a career I would like to pursue after graduating so I found it extremely beneficial to observe everyday practices.



This is an example of the Scentry codling moth trap that was used in a pear tree. All traps were attached to a bamboo stick so that they could be placed higher in the tree. The top three feet of the tree is where the most codling moth activity takes place so it is crucial to have the trap in this area.



This picture shows how a scanner was used to record the data found at each trap. Once the trap was scanned, the data could then be entered. The data was then immediately emailed to the grower and the fieldman. This information was very important so it was crucial that I was very accurate.



Above is an example of a codling moth that I caught in one of my traps. This moth was attracted by the pheromone that was placed inside of the trap. Some traps would catch up to as many as 100 moths a week and others would catch zero moths a week. Different areas and cultivars are better or worse hosts for the codling moth.



This is the truck and ATV that was provided to me to check all of the codling moth traps. I was covering a large area so these two vehicles were my most important tools for the job.

Summary

This internship proved to be extremely beneficial in helping move towards many of my career goals. I plan on becoming a fieldman when I graduate from Washington State University along with managing a farm of my own. This internship taught me important communication skills that I will carry with me once entering the work field. Also, I learned numerous approaches towards growing tree fruit that will prove very useful when starting my own orchard. The knowledge I obtained through this internship will create an excellent foundation for the learning I will continue to do once I obtain a job. This opportunity also provided me numerous mentors and connections throughout the tree fruit industry that will be great resources when dealing with horticultural issues. I also learned that Wilbur-Ellis is a company that I enjoy working for, and hope to deal with in the future.



During this internship I got to learn about numerous insects in the orchard. This picture shows lacewing eggs hanging from one of my traps in an apple orchard. The lacewing is a predator so it lays its eggs on these string-like structures so that the immatures will not eat each other. Lacewings are a beneficial insect in the orchard system.