

## Broad label fungicide becoming backbone of programs

The broad label and excellent performance of **DuPont™ Fontelis® fungicide** has led it become a backbone product in spray programs recommended by Growers Agrishop, at Forestdale south of Perth, in Western Australia.

David Buckley, from Growers Agrishop said they serviced vegetable crops from Bunbury in the south through to mid-way to Geraldton.

He said there was a diverse range of crops and the environment leant itself to disease and crop loss, if a protectant program wasn't implemented.

"Most suppliers come and see us and they are astonished at how much we are spraying our crops and that is primarily because we have such high pressure of both disease and insects," he said.

"Fontelis® is becoming one of our biggest selling, fungicides. That's primarily due to the massive label that it came out with straight away which is just about unheard of nowadays."

Mr Buckley said he could recall the DuPont rep coming in and going through the training on Fontelis® and putting up the list of crops that it was registered in.

"Our comment from the table was – oh good, over what time are what crops going to be registered and he said – no that's the label – that's registered – and we nearly fell out of our chairs."

"It was very well done and that's allowed us to hit the ground running, really put it across the whole breadth of our crops."

He said Fontelis® was being used in Carrots, Strawberries, Leafy lines, and Potatoes and had performed particularly well since being introduced.

"The performance has been good." He said. "Like all things, we put it into a program to begin with, to look at it. Seasons vary, pressures change but most of what we started with was a high pressure year and the growers were impressed."

"We've got some fussy customers but when they like something the testament is when they order again - and they are. We don't have to argue to keep Fontelis® in the program."

"In Carrots and spuds it really forms a bit of a backbone of our program. We use Fontelis® in the higher pressure times where key diseases could come in and be extremely detrimental to our crop."

Mr Buckley said the performance of Fontelis® in Strawberries had been exceptional and the concern was that growers would over use the product.

"Strawberries are a crop that scares us a little bit with Fontelis® because it has such a good fit and there are limited other options, a number of which were taken away a few years ago. Fontelis® covers the three main diseases that we find in Strawberries and our biggest problem is getting something else into the program to protect it."

In a typical vegetable program Fontelis® is used early with two sprays seven days apart before alternative fungicides are introduced.

“Obviously we are not just leaving them as standalone and we do surround them with other groups that are grouped as well. We are using Fontelis® earlier in the season to keep the pressure low” Mr Buckley said.

“Weekly sprays are extremely common and program spraying is the only way for us to have a zero tolerance. Unfortunately nowadays growers are that big that if we wait to hit a threshold and start to spray, by the time you get to the last spray we’ve lost half our crop.”

“When our growers start a season we’ve got a week by week program for both fertiliser and chemical. It gives them a budget, it gives them a plan. We do in-crop monitoring to make sure we are on top of it and we ease off if we have to.”

“We certainly believe that with all the new products and new groups of actives coming out nowadays, there is no excuse for developing resistance any more. There are enough options that you can have a very good rotation program.”

Mr Buckley said Western Australia was a small market so growers needed to achieve vegetables and fruit of a very high quality in order to compete in the eastern states or Asian markets.

“If we are going to be sending into Singapore or Asian markets they want the best as well because we can’t compete on price.

“Quality is everything. Quality will always get sold first and the only way to get quality is to grow a quality crop. It all goes hand in hand.”



**Photo caption**

David Buckley, of Growers Agrishop, Perth is using Fontelis® as the backbone of many of his spray recommendations.

