

Student 1.

Managing Practices.

Thinning is a very important practice on orchards and I consider it to be more important than the other practices such as pest and disease control because it has a large effect on apple size and colour, factors that are very important to markets [4]. Thinning using chemicals must be done carefully, correct concentration and timing, if you don't want to lose your apples but when correctly carried out the crop loading on the trees is reduced from about 1000 to 200 [1] apples and so apples have more access to water, nutrients and sunlight therefore they can grow to a bigger count size which is what most overseas market demand [2]. Spraying for diseases is also very important practice, it must be done on a regular basis in response to weather conditions especially humidity that encourages fungal diseases such as black spot and soft rots while insect pests such as codling moth are an ongoing problem. These diseases do impact on the markets that apples can be sent to. Thinning does allow for better air circulation around the trees which should reduce the risk of disease, but if this does not eventuate then spray programmes should be used such as IPM spray programmes based on a monitoring system such as traps [2].

Both practices are very important but overall you only harvest what you have grown therefore I believe that thinning is the more important practice when producing apples for overseas markets [4]. Timing of production is mainly affected by cultivar selection and all apples can be stored [3]. Thinning does restrict the number of apples but because each apple is bigger the tonnage produced may not be significantly reduced [1].