Improving Irrigation Efficiency in Pears: Long Case Study

Video Transcript. *By Tianna DuPont, WSU Extension*

Tianna DuPont: Brandon, you invited us to work in this block because there's been some challenges in this block, right? Tell me a little bit about what is your biggest challenge in this block.

Brandon Long: I would say cork. Especially recently, cork has been the biggest challenge in this block. So, when you said you wanted to do an irrigation experiment, I said "yes" because anything could help. We didn't even pick in 2017 it was that bad.

Tianna DuPont: That's tough. So, we put in the 2 sensors and you watered using the sensors in one half of the block and regular in the other half of the block. What sort of differences did you see in the soil moisture in those different areas?

Brandon Long: We saw pretty clearly, I could log in and see, that the soil moisture in the control block (regular block) was moist all the time, saturated. And you could see that, you'd walked out put a shovel in the ground or kick it and it was wet right underneath the surface. The difference being here, where we used the sensors we stayed within that "good zone." Once we hit the refill point, we'd turn on the irrigation and bring it back up. And that worked well.

Tianna DuPont: So, what did you end up with? Did it do anything for your fruit quality?

Brandon Long: It ended up being a significant benefit. There was almost a 10 percent improvement, less cork out of this block with the packouts at the end of the year.

Tianna DuPont: That's what we want to see. I'm sure it'll be refining year to year.

Brandon Long: But it was something that worked, that's awesome.

Tianna DuPont: Was the sensor pretty easy to use?

Brandon Long: Yeah, I'd say if I could use it anyone could use it.

Tianna DuPont: That's what I want to hear.

Brandon Long: It was definitely user friendly. The readouts were clear, the graphs are awesome. I could just glance at it and not have to read the numbers and know where I was; very helpful.

Tianna DuPont: Thanks for letting us hear a little bit about it and thanks for sharing.