GRAPE DAY, LODI - FEBRUARY 6 - Jim Kissler

The Annual Grape Institute will be held Tuesday, February 6, at the Lodi American Legion Building, 320 North Washington Street. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Topics to be discussed are deadarm disease control, table grape promotion, energy conservation, production of quality wine grapes, and advancements in mechanical harvesting. The luncheon speaker will be Dean Charles Hess from the University of California at Davis. Dean Hess will report on agricultural research activities at the University of California.

Anyone interested in grape production is invited.

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DEADARM DISEASE - Jim Kissler

Phomopsis Cane & Leaf Spot

Deadarm disease (Phomopsis viticola), sunburn damage, and nematodes were the major reasons Tokay production was only 100,277 tons in 1978. This was the lowest yield ever, if you don't take into account the years we had severe frost. This year's production was less than half of the 1977 crop.

Continuous spring rains following bud break resulted in the heaviest infection ever of the fungus disease called deadarm. The disease was so severe on Tokays and Grenache that it actually killed a number of new shoots. Many of the shoots that weren't killed outright later broke off at the fourth or fifth node in the area of heavy deadarm lesions. This shoot breakage took place after the shoots were 15 to 20 inches long and during strong spring winds. The majority of the shoot breakage occurred below the clusters, resulting in a big reduction in yields.

Visible symptoms of the disease in the vineyard during the dormant season are a whitish color with black specks at the base of the cane; also in this area can be seen heavy scabbing or lesion development. Growers are advised to instruct their pruners to prune out the infected wood when possible. Selecting a healthy spur at pruning time will help to reduce the amount of spur dieback next spring.

Late dormant sprays using either sodium arsenite or dinoseb (Premerge®) have been successfully used to clean up overwintering inoculum and to lessen the risk of new shoot infection. Timing of application is important. Growers should prune early and spray during the late dormant season before bud swell. At least one month after pruning is required if dormant sprays are to be used. A thorough application of one of these eradicant materials provides insurance against shoot infection if early spring weather should turn unusually cool and wet. Remember, these chemicals are hazardous to the applicator and require certain safety measures in application. They can also be toxic to the vines if used too late. Growers should check with their grape buyers before applying sodium arsenite. All wineries do not approve its use, although it is legally approved by regulatory agencies at the time of writing this article.

Spring protectant sprays can be used from bud break to 1/2-inch shoot length and again when the shoots are 5 to 6 inches in length. These protectant sprays are captan, mancozeb, and folpet. These materials should be put on prior to cool, wet weather if they are to be most effective. Where severe deadarm is present, a late dormant eradication spray followed by a protectant fungicide when the shoots are 5 to 6 inches in length should give good control.

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WHEN TO PLANT ALFALFA — Franz R. Kegel

My former colleague and farm advisor, Ron Baskett, used to give September 15 - November 15 and February 15 - March 15 as alfalfa planting periods. This was based on many years of experience working with this crop. Some of our growers who planted September and early October on raised beds had exceptionally good results. Now Yolo County Farm Advisor Carl Schoner and Dr. Bill Knipe of Northrup-King Company came up with some hard figures favoring early fall planting in tests conducted in 1977 and 1978. The following is taken from a Yolo County report, "Alfalfa - Time of Planting Test - Yolo County 1977-78." This information was presented at a recent grower meeting in Woodland.

"Alfalfa, planted and sprinkled up on September 14, 1977, yielded 7.3 tons per acre through five cuttings as compared to 6.5 tons per acre for an October 17 planting, 5.6 tons for November 16 planted alfalfa, and 4.0 tons per acre for alfalfa planted on March 21, 1978. Complete yield results are shown in the chart below:

Table 1. Hay Yield Comparisons of Alfalfa Planted on Four Dates in 1977-78

Planting Date	Yield in tons per acre by cutting and total - 100% dry matter Harvest Dates 1978					
	(1) 5/11	(2) 6/9	(3) 7/7	(4) 8/7	(5) 9/7	Total Yield
Sept. 14, 1977	1.56	1.54	1.31	1.59	1.28	7.28
Oct. 17, 1977	1.27	1.47	1.14	1.44	1.22	6.54
Nov. 16, 1977	-	1.88	1.18	1.43	1.12	5.60
Mar. 21, 1978	-	-	1.57	1.36	1.07	4.00

"Yield totals through the fifth cutting show alfalfa with the earliest planting date to have the highest yield and the latest planted alfalfa to have the least yield.

"The first cutting of each treatment was delayed until plants were well established, three to four stems per crown. As a result, the first harvest was usually the highest yielding for each treatment.

"There is a definite trend for the early fall plantings to continue higher yields through the fifth cutting. It will be interesting to learn if this trend will continue into the second year.

"It was generally observed that the September and October seeded plants had greater top and root growth and were better able to survive the wet winter better than those of the November planting.

"The spring planting had excellent stand density but has two less harvests because of the much later planting date. As a consequence, yields of the March planting are low the first season.

"Now that sprinkler systems are generally available to alfalfa growers, it seems as though September planting and sprinkling up may be a useful practice in establishing seedling alfalfa. In this trial, early fall planting had the advantage of increased plant survival during the first winter season and increased first year hay yields."