



Prolectus®

PROLECTUS® TESTIMONIAL: *James Codemo*

James Codemo is a horticulture agronomist with Nutrien Ag Solutions in Griffith. In his role, James looks after over 3000 hectares of grapes. We spoke to James about his experience with Prolectus Fungicide.

Prolectus, from Sumitomo Chemical Australia is a recently introduced fungicide which gives growers a powerful new option for the control of botrytis (bunch rot, grey mould) in grapes. It is a translaminar product able to block botrytis in various stages of its biological life cycle. This translaminar activity, whereby Prolectus moves through the leaf from one side to the other is also a factor in the superior rain-fastness of the product.

James introduced his growers to Prolectus at a series of tech updates when the product was first launched. One of these growers Pio Foscarini was impressed with what he heard and decided to trial Prolectus in his botrytis management program.

James told us that "Pio grows the Semillon variety which is susceptible to botrytis infection and as such, he likes to apply fungicides preventatively. Last season, he applied Prolectus to one block of semillon and left another block untreated. The treated block was rootstock compared to the untreated which was on its own roots. Prolectus was applied in November when the berries were pepper-corn size (4 mm diameter), the latest stage at which Prolectus can be applied.



Two weeks prior to harvest there was a significant rainfall event which resulted in split berries in both blocks. The untreated block had a severe botrytis infection and started to break down compared to the treated block which stayed clean, with the split berries drying out over time. Pio was so impressed with the effectiveness and long-lasting activity of Prolectus that he will be treating his entire property with Prolectus next season."

We asked James whether in his experience, growers were applying botrytis fungicides preventatively, or looking to come in after infection with a curative option. "While I would always advise preventative applications" said James, "there are growers with varieties that are less susceptible to botrytis infection, who will hold out and come in after an outbreak with a curative spray to provide kickback. Kickback describes how many days after an infection occurs that a fungicide can be applied and still give adequate control. With a disease like botrytis in grapes this can be important as ongoing infections, rain, and the inability to spray the vineyard quickly can allow the disease to take hold. Prolectus, like any fungicide, will always be more effective when applied preventatively, but I have seen evidence that shows it can give superior kickback to other commercially available products."

In closing, we asked James if he could sum up his experience with Prolectus Fungicide. "Firstly, it works. It offers powerful and long-lasting protection against botrytis. It has demonstrated superior kickback, and of course, it gives growers another rotation option which is always important in sustaining the effective life of all products."

"In what is forecast to be a wetter season than we have had for some years, I would definitely recommend Prolectus."

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PROLECTUS® TESTIMONIAL: *Pio Foscari*

Pio Foscari is a grapegrower in the Riverina region of New South Wales where he grows a range of varieties including semillon, shiraz, merlot and columbia.

Much of his grapes are grown on rootstock which carries a heavy crop of between 10 and 12 tonnes per acre with a dense canopy and tight bunches. This can make them susceptible to botrytis, especially during a wetter season. In one particularly wet year with heavy rain and mist, Pio almost lost his entire Semillon crop.

For this reason, Pio is quite vigilant with his disease prevention program and over the years has tried most of the fungicides in the AWRI dog book. A few years back, he attended an information night where Sumitomo introduced their new botrytis fungicide, Prolectus.

Prolectus gives growers a powerful new option for the control of botrytis in grapes. It is a translaminar product, able to block botrytis in various stages of its biological life cycle. This translaminar activity, whereby Prolectus moves through the leaf from one side to the other, is also a factor in the superior rainfastness of the product.

Pio liked what he heard and decided to give Prolectus a try. Over the last couple of years, the product seemed to work, but given the dry conditions, it was never really tested. That changed last season.

As he had done in previous seasons, he applied Prolectus to one block of semillon and left another block untreated. The treated block was grown on rootstock compared to the untreated which was on its own roots.



Pio's feeling was that the block on old roots has a more open canopy which would allow more airflow and would stand up better to disease pressure. Prolectus was applied in November when the berries were pepper-corn size (4 mm diameter), the latest stage at which Prolectus can be applied on grapes grown for export wine.

Shortly before the blocks were due to be picked, there was a significant rainfall event which resulted in split berries in both blocks. The untreated block was hit hard with a severe botrytis infection and started to break down compared to the treated block which stayed clean and held on until harvest. Pio says, the pickers couldn't believe how green and healthy the treated block was compared with the untreated.

Pio says he was impressed at how well Prolectus stood up to this test and intends to use it on all his white varieties next year including grapes on old roots.

"You don't know how good a product is until it's really tested" Pio said, "and having seen how it performed, I would really recommend Prolectus."

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