Evaporative cooling for heat waves management

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CNR-IBE

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Supported by:
The objective of the experiment was to assess the feasibility of evaporative cooling to reduce the impact of summer heat waves in apple orchards. The study aimed to evaluate the plants physiological reactions and productive performances with dripline and over-canopy irrigation in extreme temperature conditions. The two practices have been compared to estimate the potential positive effect of evaporative cooling. The practice has demonstrated to help in decreasing 2-4°C the canopy temperature during extreme heat wave events.

Future heat wave occurrences in Europe have been predicted by a targeted model to identify the apple cultivation areas most prone to such hazard. With such issues becoming more probable, the practice demonstrated to reduce heat stress in orchards to guarantee stability of production.
Description of the practice selected for the leaflet

**What?**
Implementation of the evaporative cooling practice in apple orchards.

**Why?**
This practice tackles heat waves, caused by high temperature and radiation, to help farmers maintain high productivity in extreme scenarios.

**Status?**
Ready to use with some technological upgrade (i.e. irrigation automatically driven by temperature sensors)
Main steps to implement this practice

1. Setup of dripline irrigation: 2900 m/ha with 28 drippers/ha positioned at a 40 cm; flow: 1.6 mm/h.

2. Setup of additional over-canopy irrigation: 800 m of PE, in 6 lines, with 34 sprinklers/ha; flow: 4.5 mm/h; density 16.8 m x 17.5 m.

3. Installation of air temperature sensors

4. Activation of over-canopy sprinklers at 30°C for three hours.
Evaporative cooling has demonstrated to help in decreasing leaf and fruit temperatures during extreme heat wave events. By decreasing the temperature in orchards it manages to retain the standard orchard productivity and quality expected by today’s markets.

**Take home message:** Evaporative cooling is a viable tool in the farmer's arsenal in tackling climate change and its impacts on tree performance and productivity.
Practice Performances

**Most positive outcome:**
This practice increases daily photosynthesis and maintains stability of production under extreme summer temperatures

**Main negative outcome:**
Specific investment for the irrigation system: doubling the irrigations lines and including over canopy sprinklers
Roadmap for transfer– Next steps

- The dissemination of the practice to European farmers will be worthwhile due to the proven increasing occurrence of summer heat waves.
- The irrigation systems that are currently in use in European apple orchards are mostly driplines. Growers should be instructed on how to efficiently integrate over canopy sprinklers within the irrigation apparatus.
- An agrometeorological weather station, or at least a temperature sensor, should be installed near the orchard to provide information on the temperature threshold (around 30°). Growers should be informed about the opportunity to manually start and maintain for at least 3 hours the evaporative cooling to alleviate potential hazards.
- If feasible, an automatic irrigation control, when the threshold is reached, should be set-up.
PRACTICES PERFORMANCES & RESULTS

Pumping Solar System in Strawberry Production

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Supported by:

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History of experiments and selection of practice

• Photovoltaic panels convert sunlight into electricity without the use of fossil fuels. It’s also useful for stand-alone system

• Where to place the panels

• Lifting water from wells → irrigation
Description of the practice selected for the leaflet

What?

Use of photovoltaic system to produce electricity to support strawberry cultivation and eventually post-harvest operations, such as:
- Solar pump
- Refrigerator system
- Other devices

Why?

Reducing high environmental cost (CO2eq) of electricity from fossil fuels. Strawberry farming is highly water demanding in hot and dry climate and requires pumping from wells or ponds. Photovoltaic systems are suitable for dry and hot weather, isolated area and can occupy marginal areas.

Status?

Promising results requiring additional experimentation
Main steps to implement this practice

1. System fits for South-European or North-African climates
2. Located outside greenhouse to avoid shading
3. Water intake and energy need evaluation
4. Context analysis (irradiation)
5. Choice of different solutions (conventional system, dual sides, with reflecting panels, solar trackers…)
6. Sizing and design
7. System placement
8. Performance monitoring and maintenance

Context analysis (irradiation)
Expected Key result / Message to take home

The use of a solar pump to extract the water needed for irrigation improves the environmental sustainability of strawberry cultivation.

More than 200 gCO2eq saved for 1 kg of strawberry

50 m² photovoltaic panels → quantity of water necessary annually

**Message to take home**

The use of renewable energy is nowadays an essential element to make environmental friendly the plantations ensuring accessibility to a key production factor such as water.
Practice Performances

**AGRONOMY & ENVIRONMENT**

- **Pesticide reduction effect**
  - Not expected.

- **Substitution of fossil fuel with renewable energy and stand-alone electricity production** (mitigation of GHG emission).
  - No effect on yield and fruit quality.

- **Replacement of non-renewable resources' use.**
  - GHG emission reduction.
  - No impact on the agronomic practice.

**Costs & Benefits**

- **Initial investment** required.
  - **Low time required** for setting-up of the practice.
  - **No extra time required** for management.

- Maintenance costs are very low.
  - Service life at least 12 years
  - The cost is less than 5¢€/kg strawberry.

**OPERATIONALITY**

- **Sustainable and effective energetic solution** for south-European & north-African context.

- **Ease to implement**
  - The practice does not require highly skilled staff.

- **Ready to use**
  - The practice is not technically demanding.

**Global warming potential**

- **Investment cost**
  - The initial investment is relatively high.

- **Time to set-up**
  - Setup time is relatively short.

- **Time to manage**
  - Management time is low.

**Fruit production**

- **Positive outcome**
  - The practice improves yield and fruit quality.

- **Neutral to positive outcome**
  - The practice has a neutral effect on the agronomic practice.

- **Areas of improvement**
  - Areas that require further research and development.

- **Critical points**
  - Points that need careful consideration and management.
Roadmap for transfer – Next steps

- Transfer of the prototype to Morocco, set up and performance test
- Sizing, design and sustainability and performance evaluation
- Update of the system for real energy and water need (if requested)

Thanks for your attention