



**Clarification on the blueberry rust presentation by Dr Rosalie Daniel of NSW Department of Primary Industries at the Fruit Growers Tasmania workshop.**

Please find the NSW Department of Primary Industries' response to your question below.

***In interpreting the presentation by Dr Rosalie Daniel of NSW Department of Primary Industries at the Fruit Growers Tasmania workshop, some people claim that defoliation could be used to eradicate blueberry rust. Can you please clarify this and advise on appropriateness of wide scale application in Tasmania.***

At a recent Fruit Growers Tasmania workshop the NSW Department of Primary Industries' Dr Rosalie Daniel provided a presentation on effective management of blueberry rust in general. Dr Daniel did discuss her observation on the effectiveness of rust control by defoliation on 15 cm seedlings in pots.

It appears that some of the information presented by Dr Daniel was misinterpreted.

In the small scale potted seedling evaluation, rust was observed to be eliminated from seedlings by defoliation and removal of all rust infected/non-infected leaves. In this case seedlings in the short-term observation did not develop rust because the infected leaves as the source of re-infection were removed. Note that this was a short-term observation only and not fully replicated pot experiment.

Seedling defoliation may be an effective measure in minimising the introduction of rust propagules in a plantation where the disease is not present. The NSW Department of Primary Industries has not conducted any defoliation experiments in glasshouse and field trials in commercial situations. There is no published evidence to support defoliation as a measure to eradicate blueberry rust in large scale infections.

Eradication of blueberry rust means total removal of all propagules of rust present in the State of Tasmania. According to our understanding the initial isolated and low levels of blueberry rust detection in 2015 in Tasmania was eradicated. However, blueberry rust has been detected on a larger scale in 2016 and 2017. Based on the biology and the ecology of blueberry rust, and experience of NSW DPI staff with other rusts such as Myrtle rust, total eradication of blueberry rust from Tasmania is highly unlikely.

The presentation by Dr Daniel focussed on blueberry rust management to ensure minimal production losses and quality fruit demanded in market. The presentation is attached and publically available at:

[http://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1002298/BB13002\\_Daniel\\_FGT\\_22May2017.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1002298/BB13002_Daniel_FGT_22May2017.pdf)