



# The Growers Solution

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## THERE SHOULD NOT BE A PEACH ON THE PLACE

by Marty Whitsitt

As a representative for Growers Mineral Solutions, I have burned up the phone lines to Jim Halbeisen and others in the organization in order to learn what the “right” answers are to constant questions from current and potential customers. It seems like I am always on defense against what the “educated” people have to say rather than just letting the program speak for itself through the crop. It seems there are so many folks that want all questions answered at the kitchen table, like the establishment does, but want nothing more than bragging rights for highest yield at the coffee shop at the end of the season.

It is a breath of fresh air when those tables are turned around and the customer starts providing a list of things they have seen changing while using GMS. This is what happened with Jim Seiler of Lakeview Orchard near Reo in southern Indiana.

Jim stopped by the GMS booth at the Louisville Farm Machinery Show in February of 2019 and simply said, “Who is your local guy to talk to about this stuff?” I took my new salesman, my son Tyler, to Reo so we could fill this guy in on what GMS could do for him. Better flavor and longer shelf life of his peaches as well as healthier trees was what we told him. Jim ordered some GMS to give it a try on parts of his peach orchard. As the 2019 harvest was kicking into gear, Jim began telling us a few improvements he had noticed. Flavor was good, better holding ability (don’t fall off when limb shakes while picking), and less spider mite pressure.

Through the winter, Tyler and I kept talking to Jim about GMS being a program and not just a product to add to what is normally done. We emphasized how nitrogen can hurt flavor and diminish the health of the trees, and encouraged him to add GMS any time the sprayer is being pulled through the orchard.

2020 began with GMS added to the early crop oil spray, at pink tip and full blossom, and no N used. That’s when Mother Nature blew in a cold snap in the first week of April. Jim spent two nights watching thermometers scattered around his orchard. He was not very pleasant to talk to after this ordeal. “Hit hard” and “ugly” were some comments he had, along with a few other choice words. “The majority of this orchard was at 24 degrees for over 12 hours, and down in the valley was closer to 18 degrees. Just sickening.”

A couple of days later, Jim’s demeanor began to change as he was finding that the only trees that were completely froze out were in the lowest part of the valley. A few more days, and his thoughts were, “Maybe the freeze did my thinning of fruit for me.” A little over a week, and the report was that almost all of his peaches would need to be thinned like any other year. “Unbelievable,” “amazing,” and “ridiculous” were being added to his vocabulary. “Other orchards that recorded two to three degrees warmer than me and even had inversion fans running are wiped out.”

Lakeview Orchard ordered more GMS.

Jim has been in peaches all of his 60 years. He does not mince words about what works, what doesn’t, and what he is seeing changing with using GMS. When Tyler and I talked with him during the rest of the growing season, we asked a lot of dumb questions since we are not peach growers. We soon realized that



Jim Seiler applies calcium directly to the bark of trees for health effects.

“Peach,” continued on page 3





