



## antibiotics and the organic standards

Posted by [Michael Phillips](#)  
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[Michael Phillips](#)  
[antibiotics and the organic standards](#)

December 19, 2012 04:34AM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

I spent nearly an hour this afternoon on the phone with Tracy Favre of the Organic Standards Board discussing biological alternatives to antibiotics to deal with a potential fire blight epidemic. Absolutely, I'm pleased that one of these folks wants to better understand the holistic viewpoint. Tracy is an "environmental rep" for the [NOP \(National Organic Program\)](#) but it turns out she's also a pecan grower down in Texas. And has recently added a fruit orchard to her homestead to boot. Tree perspective matters here. Anyhow, I made a strong case for biology over synthetic medicines. Pseudomonas as a competitive organism has a proven track record. Effective microbes and/or compost tea changes blossom dynamics for bacterial opportunists like *Erwinia amylovora* (fire blight bacterium) every time. Washington growers using hops extracts have shown that the nutrient tack demonstrates extreme effectiveness as well. Read the details in [Holistic Orchard](#) if you're not up to speed here.

The quandary in this ongoing debate is the need by big organic apple growers out West to protect plantings in a conventional (albeit questionable) manner. Apparently we smaller growers out East and in the Midwest just don't recognize the risk involved in planting susceptible varieties on susceptible rootstocks across acres and acres of orchard. And thus the "question of scale" has NOP representatives seriously considering allowing the continued use of antibiotics for approved organic production. The pivotal point regardless of tree count is that every grower needs to get out there with spray protection the day prior to a high risk infection event. I'm willing to bet good money on the competitive colonization approach backed by deep nutrition to do a far better job than Streptomycin and whatever Monsanto comes up with.

And when push comes to shove ... which really better suits your idea of what "organic" is supposed to be about?

[Lost Nation Orchard](#)

Zone 4b in New Hampshire

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 12/19/2012 05:07AM by Michael Phillips.

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[Michael Phillips](#)  
[Webinar: Fire Blight Alternatives](#)

February 16, 2013 09:13PM

**Moderator**

Registered: 11 years ago

Posts: 621

*I'll pass along this learning opportunity for growers as to alternative strategies for fire blight. Please give a report back here if you "attend" this presentation. That link provides a preview of the slides and thus the approaches being detailed.*

If you know any organic apple or pear growers who might be interested, here is an upcoming webinar on **March 13** where Dr Ken Johnson, Oregon State University, will discuss fire blight control without antibiotics, which are being phased out by the NOSB. Ken is probably the leading researcher in the country on this.

<http://www.extension.org/pages/62448/fire-blight-control-in-organic-pome-fruit-systems-under-the-proposed-non-antibiotic-standard>

David Granatstein  
Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center  
Washington State University  
1100 N. Western Ave.  
Wenatchee, WA 98801 USA  
Tel. 509.663.8181 x.222

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[Francis Brabant](#)  
[Re: antibiotics and the organic standards](#)

April 20, 2013 03:12AM

You may want to look at Blossom Protect:

[Blossom Protect Label](#)

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 11

Approved for organic use. You apply it before the Fire Blight risk. It colonizes the site where the bacteria tries to enter the flower and make it un hospitable by making it acidic.

In Canada, Strepto is a no-no for organic use even tough you can use it in the US until 2014.

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[adam sanborn](#)

[Re: antibiotics and the organic standards](#)

February 25, 2016 06:54AM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 9

Do you have experience with blossom protect, it would be something I'd be willing to try as we have a lot of fire blight pressure here. I want to be as natural intervention as possible so will likely try to go without it and more holistic until it proves to be a problem in our orchard.

No fences orchard and cidery

spokane wa 5b

[Reply](#) [Quote](#)

[Mike Biltonen](#)

[Re: antibiotics and the organic standards](#)

February 25, 2016 03:10PM

Registered: 10 years ago

Posts: 298

Washington state's commercial industry is notorious for virulent (e.g., strep resistant) fireblight because of years of antibiotic use and an incredible environment for infections. If you have a biologically rich orchard (lots of good bacteria and fungi), then you're already ahead of the game (for Washington state anyway). But with cider varieties being so susceptible you need to be extra vigilant. Pure holistic approach may not cut it in a bad year, so I would recommend to continue building the bio-rich environment and at least experimenting with Blossom Protect (and similar approaches) before actually needing them in a crisis situation. There are other compounds out there that are worth looking at even though their track record isn't all that hot in commercial settings: Bloomtime (P. agglomerans), Fire Quencher (bacteriophage - not registered as far as I know), Actigard (systemic activated resistance) plus the organics: Cueva, Serenade, Double Nickel. The trick with all of them is make sure the surface of the plant and the open flowers parts of covered with the competitive organisms (or compounds) well ahead of an infection so they can out-compete the invading Erwinia. Start applying before the flowers open -- like around tight cluster. Oh, and dont apply anything wou ldkill off the good biology before you actually need it to work. It takes time for them establish, so this isn't a discrete spray. You mentioned in your previous post using whey protein -- AgriDynamics has a whey "yogurt" product that I've heard (spoken with a few row crop farmers) works really well on mildews (Fungi). I havent heard any direct reviews of it against bacteria though -- but it can't hurt. If you have an orchard that has low or no fireblight, then you are your own best friend right now. Yes, fireblight can blow in from neighboring infected orchards, but if you can keep your orchard clean, remove and destroy any infections that you might find, and generally keep the conditions for future infection low (low vigor, resistant varieties, proper pruning and nutrition, etc.) then you can probably practice a near-pure holistic program and remain fireblight free.

[Mike Biltonen, Know Your Roots](#)

Zone 5b in New York

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[adam sanborn](#)

[Re: antibiotics and the organic standards](#)

February 25, 2016 11:45PM

Registered: 7 years ago

Posts: 9

Thanks Mike, I'll get into looking at these compounds!!

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[Sue Haynie](#)

[Agriphage Curative for Fire Blight](#)

May 19, 2022 05:28AM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 5

See message below. Thank You...

Edited 1 time(s). Last edit at 05/19/2022 05:43AM by Sue Haynie.

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[Sue Haynie](#)

[Re: Agriphage Curative for Fire Blight](#)

May 19, 2022 05:29AM

Registered: 3 years ago

Posts: 5

Hello Brittany Kordick - We need your input on the study that you have participated in with using Agriphage as a "Curative" for Fire Blight. This is for those of us in New England who were not here to prepare for the the first two (2) Fire Blight episodes on Sun. May 11, 2022 and Mon. May 12, 2022. Questions:

1. How many hours before rain events can Agriphage be applied?
2. What temperatures are too Hot to apply Agriphage?
3. What are the intervals? (Each time after a FB Strike when there is no rain for 24 hours?)
4. What's the coverage on leaves, flowers, branches and trunk?  
(Should run off be "Slow Drip" or "Fast Drip"?)
5. Should adequate coverage also be on the branches and trunks?
6. What is the duration of applications? For example, should Agriphage be applied on a weekly basis all summer long?
7. Have you tested tank mixing Agriphage with nutritionals such as Biotin Calcium or Boron? If so, is it recommended to tank mix these minerals?

Sweet Seasons Farm

Zone 4 in northeastern Vermont

Edited 2 time(s). Last edit at 05/19/2022 05:45AM by Sue Haynie.

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