



G.S. Long Co. Yakima, WA Chase Edwards Summer 2014



G.S. Long assigned me a company iPhone for communication and data recording purposes. They have designed their own app that trappers use to input trap counts and send them to the field consultants with just a few clicks.

Introduction

G.S. Long Co. is a chemical and fertilizer retailer based in Yakima, WA. In addition, they provide a number of other services, the most notable being crop consultation. The position I held was "Trapper", essentially I checked and maintained pheromone traps that catch pests to tree fruit.

Responsibilities

Codling moths, leafrollers, peach tree borers, and other insects can wreak havoc on the tree fruit industry. Growers do have access to controls such as pesticides, but they need to know when to use them, that's where a trapper comes in. My job was to monitor pest populations across many orchards by using pheromone traps. Each trap was checked once per week. The amount of pests in a trap is recorded and sent to the G.S. Long field consultant assigned to that orchard. A field consultant can then use these trap counts to extrapolate information about pest populations (population density, life cycle information, movement, etc.) The consultant then uses that information along with his/her knowledge and observations to recommend pest management methods to the grower.

Summary

My summer with G.S. Long Co. was extremely valuable. First and foremost, having a full time job pushed me to be responsible, punctual, and communicative. I learned how to identify many different types of pests, and how they are problematic to the tree fruit industry in the Pacific Northwest. It showed me how many different moving part of the crop consulting business work together, and how important it is that everyone works diligently and together to achieve the goal of providing a quality service for growers. Being a field consultant is a very likely career path for me. By exposing myself the industry with hands-on experience, I gained valuable insight about what is involved and surrounds that career. On top of all of that, I met some very great people in the industry and had a great time doing it all.



Here is an example of a trapping map. They are what trappers use to navigate orchards. Maps are very important, as finding a small trap in vast orchards can become very confusing. This map is actually of the orchard picture in the background.



Here are two examples of pests in apple orchards. On the left is the infamous codling moth. On the right, are two obliquebanded leafrollers.



The orange triangular box is a typical trap. This particular one is a codling moth trap. Codling moth traps are hung on PVC pipe so that they can reach the tops of the trees. In many orchards, pheromone mating disruptors are used to try to fight pest populations. These pheromones tend to sink downwards. So, codling moths tend to be more active in the top 1/3rd of the tree. As a result, traps should be placed there.



Here is me with my company truck and four-wheeler that I was assigned to perform my duties.