

Hi Point Orchard / Rick Orozco
Mesa, WA
Site Visit – Wednesday, August 5, 2009

Management Scenarios

1. *Rick has noticed that fruit trees next to the poplar windbreak have lower yields, but the poplars benefit the farm in other ways. Evaluate the costs and benefits of maintaining the windbreak plantings. If the poplars were removed, what would be another approach to managing high winds?*
2. *If Rick wanted to establish windbreaks to serve as spray barriers, noise or visual screens and pollinator/beneficial organism habitat, what other species might he consider? How might this change the design of the windbreak?*
3. *Rick wants to replace an orchard on the steep slopes near the entrance road. What resource issues should he consider?*
4. *On steeper slopes, how can soil erosion be minimized during orchard replacement? How might water be delivered to minimize erosion?*
5. *Currently Rick plants mostly peas as the between-row cover crop. What are the advantages and disadvantages?*

6. What other cover crops or strategies might Rick consider to:
 - a) avoid increasing rodent or lygus bug pest populations?
 - b) plant on steep slopes?
 - c) maintain a smooth aisle surface for transporting delicate fruit without bump damage?
 - d) increase habitat for beneficial insects ?
 - e) improve fertility for the tree rows?

7. *Current weed control practices include up to 7 passes with the mechanical Wonder Weeder.* Compare soil quality indicators in the tree row (undisturbed) and between rows (where the weeder passes). Do any observed differences lead you to recommend changes to the weed management approach?

8. What other strategies could be used to reduce the number of passes with mechanical cultivation without threatening his organic certification?

9. If Rick wanted to increase irrigation efficiency on the farm, where might he focus his attention to have the greatest impact? Use topography, soils maps, and crop variety information to guide your response. What approaches would you suggest to improve irrigation efficiency?

10. If Rick were interested in applying for the Conservation Stewardship Program is he likely to qualify with his current practices? What changes might Rick want to consider in order to increase his ranking score?