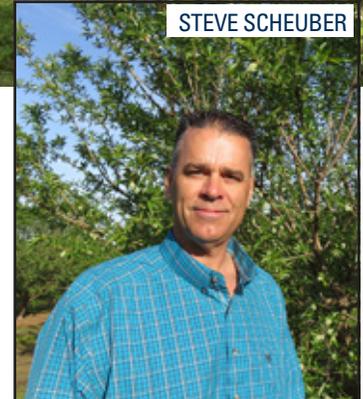


NETAFIM DRIP IRRIGATION SUCCESS STORY

ALMONDS



STEVE SCHEUBER

DRIP GETS THE RIGHT NUTRIENTS TO THE TREES CREATING HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

Steve Scheuber is gladly investing in more drip irrigation after calculating the savings and benefits he's earning on two of his four orchards near Hughson, CA.

His third and fourth leaf almond blocks have been irrigated with Netafim driplines and emitters since being planted. Now his older orchards, which were flood irrigated through last year, are in the process of having driplines installed to reap the advantages he's enjoyed on the younger trees.

Scheuber's drip system - with the trees centered between double rows of hose 40 inches apart - is designed to provide optimal irrigation with less water. Using double lines directs the water away from the trunk to expand the rooting zone below ground while promoting canopy growth.

Scheuber says working with Ron Nydam, from Waterford Irrigation - an authorized Netafim Dealer, made the installation a worry-free process. Nydam designed the system based on Scheuber's well output to determine the correct spacing of the drip emitters and output per minute. The system's emitters put out just under one gallon per hour and it runs until Scheuber is satisfied with the moisture readings. He then bases his next irrigation on the evapotranspiration rate and readings from soil moisture probes placed strategically within the orchards, which can be read from a smart phone or other device.

 **OVER 40% INCREASE IN 3RD LEAF PRODUCTIVITY**

"With those tools, I can apply just what the trees need," Scheuber explained. "The drip system is a more efficient method of delivering water and it has increased my production over flood."

To ensure optimal drip irrigation, Scheuber monitors soil moisture to correctly gauge the amount of water needed to accelerate growth. This method, he says, keeps the trees hydrated and reduces stress. "The younger trees don't take nearly the amount of water that a mature orchard needs so I was able to use less water with the drip system to establish these trees."



ALMONDS

While the young trees have not yet reached their full yield potential, Scheuber knows they are achieving that capacity quicker on drip. "I increased third leaf productivity by over 40 percent than on my flood irrigated block," he said of the enhanced growth he's seeing with drip.

Scheuber is also very impressed with reducing equipment passes through the orchards by using the driplines to add nutrients or other applications to the trees. Under flood, he made nine to 11 or more passes through the season compared to five with drip. The savings he's realizing from the cost, time, and labor of sidelining machinery is being added to his profit margins.

"Every equipment pass in the orchard probably costs at least \$15 an acre so that equals a \$6,000 savings on my operation," Scheuber said. "I've cut my equipment use by half, which isn't such an obvious reason to have drip, but one that I've come to love."

Besides lowering costs, he says, "Drip is a wonderful tool to getting the right nutrients to the trees, which allows me to create higher productivity faster."

Another benefit Scheuber appreciates is weed abatement. "I only need to put herbicide applications around strips of the trees since there is no moisture out in the centers, which keeps weeds from getting the moisture needed to thrive and grow."

The drip system, Scheuber says, is also a great fit for his needs since it needs little maintenance. They scout for leaks, but he's encountered few problems. "That's one of the reasons I chose to go with drip," he says, when he talks to other growers about the low maintenance and other positive benefits he's derived from installing drip. "I also love the ability to keep the trees at good moisture levels throughout the whole growing season and being able to put fertilizers or whatever else the trees need right through the system."

Scheuber is not only saving on input costs, but reducing unnecessary applications.

"In my old practice using flood irrigation, I put on larger amounts of fertilizers," he said. "Now with the drip system, I can inject smaller amounts and just spoon feed these trees throughout the growing season without putting large amounts of nitrates and nitrogen into the soil where the trees may not be able to pick it up."

The total water and cost savings, improved growth, decreased carbon footprint, and other positive benefits has made Scheuber a very satisfied customer who hopes his story will inspire other growers to seriously consider switching to drip irrigation.



KEY BENEFITS

- ✓ HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY FASTER
- ✓ IMPROVED GROWTH
- ✓ DECREASES WATER USE AND COSTS
- ✓ DECREASES CARBON FOOTPRINT
- ✓ REDUCES WEEDS
- ✓ REDUCES EQUIPMENT PASSES SAVES LABOR



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