

Costs and challenges of protecting fruit

Bird damage is a perennial problem for fruit farmers, and the most effective way to protect the produce is with expensive netting.

By Justin Huntsdale 9 Dec 2015, Australia



PHOTO: Darkes Forest apple grower Jo-Anne Fahey.

Many farmers net their entire property.

"We have a program for the next two years to increase our netting and net the orchard to the ground, but it takes a lot of time, manpower and money," Ms Fahey said.

"There's a netting program in New South Wales where the Government helps subsidize netting for bats and we've accessed some of that funding, but most of our netting was put up before that funding was available."

Any repairs caused by common weather events such as hail or wind are paid for by the farmer, and nets usually have a 10-year lifespan.

"We have no other choice. You have to do it or you get nothing and have no fruit to sell," Ms Fahey said.