

What's Cool

Products that are smart, make your tasks easier and provide cost or labor savings

Bill Pregler

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New Electrostatic Sprayers for 2012

Designed for ATVs in small vineyards, lower-weight units are smaller and use less fuel.

IT SEEMS EVERY YEAR I visit with the folks at **ON-Target Spray**, who manufacture electrostatic spraying equipment. As their name implies, they really know how to focus on the specific needs of vineyards, and their latest entry looks to be spot on.

ON-Target had been approached by numerous small growers (5 to 8 acres) who had embraced the science of electrostatic spraying but were limited by the size of their vineyards or tractor horsepower or had narrow row spacing issues or were on a limited budget. Enter ON-Target's new design, the **Cube™**.

As a totally self-contained unit, the Cube is only 36 x 36 x 24 inches and, even with a 50-gallon mixing tank, weighs in at only 540 pounds. It is designed specifically to nest in the back of a Gator-like vehicle or, with optional wheels, be towed behind an ATV. My research shows almost all ATVs qualify.

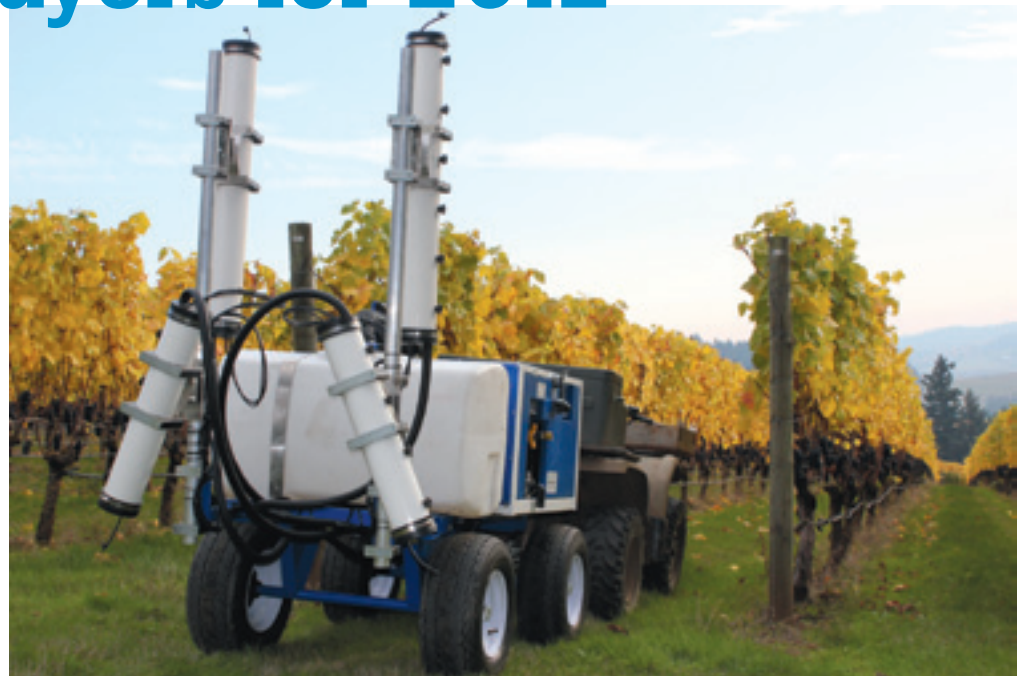
No need for tractor PTO as this rig is powered by a factory-approved, gas-stingy Honda V-twin engine. I was advised the low fuel consumption allows for three full hours of continuous operation. Like all sprayers from ON-Target, the Cube features the quiet, German-made Kaeser Tri-lobe (rotary) blower instead of a noisy vane-fan so typical in other spray equipment. A Hypro pump delivers the liquid and agitates the tank.

Many people might question the use of a small mixing tank, but water and chemical savings are two distinct advantages of the new generation of electrostatic sprayers. For an in-depth review of the technology, visit my September 2009 Product Review, "Powder Coating your Vines."

Based on Coulomb's Law, electrostatic works because opposite electrical charges attract. In this application, the atomized 30- to 50-micron spray droplets emerge with a positive charge and are immediately drawn into the canopy of the negatively-charged "grounded" vines.

Once inside the canopy, the swirling action of this "mist" actually results in chemicals reaching behind and adhering to the backs of leaves. Think in terms of metal filings and a magnet. It is similar to paint technology in today's car factories; you are essentially powder-coating your vines.

Some growers claim water usage is reduced up to 75 percent, with added savings from using only 30 percent of the normal amount of chemicals. With such efficiency and less need for liquid comes the reduction of gross vehicle weight, which is what the Cube is all about. You can go further into the vineyard with a single load, using a smaller vehicle.



The compact and lightweight Cube™ is easily towed behind an ATV.

With the low-volume application, the Cube's 50 gallons can cover up to an 8-acre vineyard. As an added plus, electrostatic spray adhesion and small droplet size result in a significant reduction in runoff and wasted product (money) on the ground.

Less weight also means the grower can now enter the vineyard earlier, during wet spring conditions, when a tractor cannot.



The simple design features a dependable Honda engine and quiet Kaeser rotary vane blower.



Spray manifolds mounted on ball swivel-clamps afford maximum adjustment.

The spray booms are actually tubular manifolds that contain the spray nozzles. The Cube has four manifolds with ball-swivel clamps for maximum adjustment of left and right spray patterns during a single pass. Depending on the trellis configuration, manifolds can be added later or turned on and off, depending on need.

The 50-gallon tank will last for 72 minutes with all nozzles on. In the early season, the tank will last for 160 minutes with two spray manifolds turned off.

As is typical with ON-Target, the company will customize your spray pattern. As a sole proprietorship and OEM manufacturer, it is more than happy to work with the grower to deliver the best design for the specific application.

What's Cool:

Between all the cost savings, from chemicals and smaller tractors that use less fuel, to less time and labor in the vineyards, the folks at ON-Target really help amortize your equipment purchases. I have seen charts comparing air blast designs to electrostatic technology, and the differences are impressive.

Using less water and substantially less chemicals are also good for our environment. The adhesion of electrically-charged particulate helps reduce drift and runoff.

At last, all of this cutting-edge technology is now available to the small grower with an ATV.

For more information, contact ON-Target Spray or **Progressive Grower Technology, Inc.** at (503) 329-8120 or www.ontargetspray.com. **WBM**

Send new product information to Bill Pregler
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Reed Renaudin
– X Winery

‘Nuff said.

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