



## **For Immediate Release**

DATE: February 1, 2012  
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### **Blossom Protect™ Approved by EPA as a Biopesticide to Prevent Fire Blight in Apples and Pears**

**Vista, CA** Blossom Protect™ was approved on January 31, 2012 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a biopesticide for the control of fire blight in pome fruit orchards. Blossom Protect™ is approved for use in organic production. Developed by bio-ferm GmbH in Tulln, Austria, and exclusively marketed in the United States by Westbridge Agricultural Products of Vista, California, Blossom Protect™ is a highly effective fire blight preventative for use on apple and pear trees. Dr. Larry Parker, Director of Westbridge Research and Development, said that “Four years of trials in the U.S. and several years of actual grower use in Europe have proven the effectiveness of Blossom Protect™ in controlling fire blight, either used by itself or as a tool with other products in a program of Integrated Pest Management.”

Blossom Protect™ works by introducing highly competitive microorganisms on to the fruit blossom which block the fire blight pathogen from colonizing the apple and pear blossom. Dr. Parker commented that “Blossom Protect™ is not an antibiotic and, as such, will be an important and effective tool for the prevention of fire blight.”

Fire blight is caused by the bacterium *Erwinia amylovora* and is one of the most damaging and pervasive diseases in pome fruit. The traditional method of combating this disease has been the use of antibiotics, but their extensive use has resulted in antibiotic resistant strains of *E. amylovora*. Antibiotic resistance has become a major concern to growers. In contrast, Blossom Protect™ acts as a competitive antagonist and does not directly attack the fire blight pathogen. There is no risk of the *E. amylovora* developing resistance even with frequent applications. It leaves no chemical residue, is safe for humans and animals, and is harmless to bees and beneficials.

Tina Koenemann, President of Westbridge, stated that “Westbridge is pleased to be the exclusive distributor of Blossom Protect™. It confirms Westbridge’s commitment to bringing premier products to market to meet the important needs of growers in America.”

Westbridge is an American manufacturer and distributor of world-class liquid fertilizers and crop protection products. From its certified Organic BioLink® and TRIGRR® to EarthTrend® and SUNburst® products, Westbridge provides a complete portfolio of high quality inputs and other products to meet the grower's crop production and crop protection needs.

For questions about Blossom Protect™ or the Westbridge product line, please do not hesitate to contact our office at (800) 876-2767 or visit our website at [www.westbridge.com](http://www.westbridge.com).

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