DEVELOPMENT OF 6-BENZYLADENINE AS AN APPLE THINNER
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The road from discovery through evaluation, field testing, and then marketing of 6-benzyladenine (6-BA) is one of the most interesting and longest of the presently-used chemical thinners. In the 1960s 6-BA was identified as having high cytokinin activity. Its ability to stimulate cell division in the calyx end of apples resulted in developing a commercial product to elongate apples that also contained GA4+7. Abscission is not a physiological characteristic that is normally attributed to cytokinins but it was soon discovered that this product (Promalin®)could cause some fruit thinning. Initially it was assumed that the thinning was due to the GA4+7 component but 6-BA was also shown to cause abscission. Over the next few years 6-BA was shown to thin apples, increase fruit size and enhance return bloom. The first 6-BA product to be released contained a small amount of GA4+7 and it was not accepted commercially. Not until several years later when an all 6-BA product was introduced that is was accepted and adopted by the apple industry.