

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

Modest, Quality 2003 Crop Should Yield Good Returns

Industry leaders from across the country recently gathered in Chicago at the U.S. Apple Association's (USApple) 2003 Apple Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference, and projected the 2003 U.S. apple crop to total 216.2 million bushels, an 11 percent reduction from the five-year average. After a small crop last year, industry leaders are in agreement that this year's crop appears to be a good match for supply and demand, and expect it to deliver both high quality apples to consumers and high returns for growers.

USApple's 2003 crop forecast is smaller than U.S. Department of

Agriculture's (USDA) 2003 forecast of 220.6 million bushels released earlier this month, and is 12 percent lower than USDA's average of the past five crop years of 242.1 million bushels. USApple's 2003 forecast ranks this year's expected harvest as the second-lightest since 1988, and only 6 percent larger than USDA's final estimate for the 2002 crop of 203.7 million bushels. However, with high quality anticipated this year and minimal carryover from last year's crop, growers can expect higher returns ahead.

"This year's apple crop is a
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Health News Abounds at Harvest Time

The U.S. Apple Association (USApple) announced arrival of the 2003 U.S. apple crop to food and health media nationwide earlier this month, as part of the association's program to educate consumers about the growing list of apple health benefits. The harvest outreach campaign is intended to generate media coverage of apples in the coming weeks in newspapers, news and health Web sites and broadcast programs across the country, at the same time that groundwork laid months ago is resulting in coverage of apples and their health benefits in fall magazine editions.

In addition to reporting on the crop estimate developed at Outlook 2003, USApple's crop announcement – viewable online in the Consumer and the Media/Press Release sections of USApple's Web site at www.usapple.org – also recapped recent health benefits research about apples, linking apple consumption to everything from weight *loss* to hair *gain*. The crop announcement also reported on apple innovations consumers can expect at the marketplace this year, including flavorful new varieties and

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Wittenbach Named Apple Person of the Year



Ed Wittenbach of Belding, Mich. (right) was named 2003 Apple Person of the Year by The Packer. Presenting the award is Tom Karst, National Editor for The Packer (left). See complete story, page 3.

Charlie Cook Discusses Political Outlook at USApple-PAC Event



By Brian Sparks, Managing Editor
American/Western Fruit Grower
Guest Contributor to Apple News

Political analyst Charlie Cook was the featured speaker at USApple-PAC's Fund-Raising Breakfast at the 2003 Apple Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference in Chicago.

Cook, who is editor and publisher of *The Cook Political Report*, is a regular analyst on CNN's "Inside Politics," and has appeared on NBC's "Meet The Press," ABC's "This Week" and "Nightline," and several other national news shows.

After leading off with a funny review of the corrupt history of governors in his home state of Louisiana, Cook spoke to attendees about the current political climate in Washington. He stressed that, although Republicans have only a slight advantage in numbers in both the House and the Senate, today's partisan atmosphere will make it very difficult for Democrats to gain control of either chamber. The 2000 elections were very close, and the Senate even changed hands between 2000 and 2002. But by the end of 2002, Republicans once

again had control of both the House and Senate, and in 2004 there are very few races that are expected to be closely contested.

The presidential race could be a lot more interesting, says Cook, depending on how the economy and the situation in Iraq shift in the next year. If the economy rebounds, and the situation in Iraq improves, then Cook says President Bush will be very safe regardless of which candidate the Democrats eventually nominate. However, if the economy falters and soldiers continue to be killed in Iraq, then Bush could have his hands full if more Americans become disenchanted with where things are headed.

Cook says the country is currently about as evenly divided as it has ever been. According to his report, 33% of people identify themselves as Republicans, 32% identify themselves as Democrats, and 34% identify themselves as independents.

Cook suggested that U.S. apple growers and industry members pay close attention to the 2004 elections, and get involved if they can. One of the best things they can do is make personal visits to Congressional offices in Washington and let political leaders know how important the apple industry is to this country, and what they can do to help it.

USApple-PAC, an apple specific political action committee, enables the apple industry to better promote its positions on food safety and pesticide regulation, farm labor reform, international trade, and other critical issues.

For more information on USApple-PAC, contact USApple President and CEO Nancy Foster at (800) 781-4443 or via email at nfoster@usapple.org. ■

Food Facilities Registration Required

Commercial fruit warehouses, packing sheds, cold storages and other similar buildings must register with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) by Dec. 12, as required by the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (the Bioterrorism Act). This act, created in response to Sept. 11, gives the FDA increased authority to protect the nation's food supply against terrorist acts and other threats.

There is no registration fee, and the final registration forms should be available from FDA on Oct. 10. The forms will be available on the FDA Web site, www.fda.gov. FDA is urging companies to register online in order to expedite the registration process.

The proposal excludes farms, restaurants, other retail food establishments, nonprofit food establishments in which food is prepared for or served directly to the consumer, certain fishing vessels, and facilities (such as meat and poultry slaughterhouses) that are regulated exclusively by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For more information on The Bioterrorism Act, visit the FDA Bioterrorism Web site at www.fda.gov/oc/bioterrorism/bioact.html, or contact USApple Vice President Jim Cranney at (800) 781-4443 or via email at jcranney@usapple.org. ■



Ed Wittenbach Honored at Outlook 2003

Ed Wittenbach of Wittenbach Orchards, Belding, Mich., was named "Apple Person of the Year" at Outlook 2003. The award, presented by *The Packer* and *The Grower*, recognizes a person who has shown strong leadership and commitment to the apple industry.

"Ed has been a shining star for U.S. apple growers," said USApple President and CEO Nancy Foster. "He has worked diligently as an officer for USApple, and has been a catalyst for change in Michigan and the entire U.S. apple industry. His vision and dedication to the entire U.S. apple industry really makes him the perfect selection for Apple Person of the Year."

Wittenbach owns and operates Wittenbach Orchards, in Belding, Mich. A second-generation grower, Wittenbach started farming on the family farm at the age of 21. The farm dates back to the early 1900s and at that time consisted of 100 acres, used mostly for cattle, with 10 acres devoted to apples. Today the operation consists of 520 acres, of which 220 acres are devoted to apples. Wittenbach's son, Mike, has joined the orchard and is working to continue his father's success.

Wittenbach served on the board of USApple from 1997 to 2003, acting as chairman in 2001. He has also been on the board of the Michigan Apple Committee, president of the Michigan State Horticultural Society, chairman and board member of Belleharvest, officer and member of the Pomester Club, and a state officer with Future Farmers Association.

Wittenbach's family includes his wife, Linda, and their four children. ■

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fresh-cut apple slices. USApple positioned apples and apple products as convenient, healthy foods that are ideal for today's time-crunched consumer who demands healthy foods but isn't willing to compromise on taste.

"Today's consumers want fast, no-fuss, no-mess foods whether they're assembling ready-to-eat or heat-and-eat ingredients into meals at home or eating on the go — and they aren't willing to sacrifice taste or nutrition in the process," the statement quoted Harry Balzer,

consumer trends expert with the NPD Group, whose recent analyses have documented the exploding convenience food movement, as well as our new definition of home cooking, the changing nature and need for food prepared away from home, and what is in our lunchboxes. "Foods that can supply the added comfort

factor also are still trending hot with consumers."

At the same time USApple is working to generate positive information about apples in the media during harvest time, work undertaken months ago is now

appearing in fall magazine issues. A special insert into the September issue of *Family Circle* magazine showcased apples, based extensively on information from USApple, reaching 5 million readers. The Sept. 9 issue of *Woman's World*, reaching 1.6 million readers, featured highlights on recent apple weight loss research news, generated by USApple

efforts in April to notify U.S. media of that international study.

For more information about USApple activities to research and educate consumers about the health benefits of apples, contact USApple Vice President of Public Relations by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via email at jdaly@usapple.org. ■



USApple provided information that appeared in this magazine, reaching 5 million readers in September.

Regional Reporters Educate at Outlook 2003



USApple regional reporters educated attendees on the 2003 crop outlook at Outlook 2003. Outlook attendees coordinated to update the regional crop estimates from the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates released in mid-August.

Thank You For Making Outlook 2003 A Success!

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win-win for consumers and the U.S. apple industry,” said USApple Vice President Jim Cranney. “Consumers will find top-quality American apples with more variety choices and a bigger range of fruit sizes, while the modest crop size and lack of carryover supplies from 2002 should generate higher returns per bushel for growers.”

The USDA forecast indicates the 2003 New England crop will be lighter than average, down 11 percent from the five-year average but up 23 percent from last year’s light harvest. New York apple growers, rebounding from serious frost damage last year, are expected to produce 24.3 million bushels, 50 percent greater than 2002, and 2 percent higher than the five-year average. In the Appalachian region, the crop is anticipated to be 17 percent greater than last year, but 5 percent lighter than the five-year average. Michigan growers are forecast to produce an above-average crop in 2003, with that state’s harvest expected to be up 94 percent from 2002’s light production level, and 9 percent higher than the five-year average.

Production by Washington state growers is forecast to be down 5 percent from last year, and down 12 percent from the five-year average. This decrease in production is being attributed to a “down” year in the biennial bearing cycle for apples, and to a reduction in statewide orchard acreage. The California crop is expected to be up 9 percent from last season, and 23 percent less than the five-year average.

For more information, contact Cranney via telephone at (800) 781-4443 or via email at jcranney@usapple.org. ■

Support Those Who Support Us!

USApple Names Officers, Elects Trustees

USApple elected a new slate of officers at its Board of Trustees meeting Aug. 23, held in Chicago in conjunction with Outlook 2003. The trustees' meeting followed the election by association members of nine trustees to the board at USApple's Annual Business Meeting, which was held Aug. 22.

"USApple officers guide our association's activities on behalf of all our members, and are vital to the success of our activities," said USApple President and CEO Nancy E. Foster. "Our association has chosen an incredibly knowledgeable and well-qualified group of individuals to lead the U.S. apple industry in the coming year."

USApple's newly-elected chairman is Larry Olsen. Olsen is co-owner and founder of Olsen Brothers, a 1,800-acre farm in Prosser, Wash. Olsen is also the former chairman of the Washington Apple Commission.

USApple's vice chairman is Jeffrey (Jeff) Crist, co-owner Crist Bros. Orchards, Inc., a 500-acre farm in Walden, N.Y. Crist is a director and former chairman of the New York Apple Association.

USApple's new secretary-treasurer is Scott B. Smith, general manager of Smith & Nelson, Inc., Tonasket, Wash., an independent grower, packer, shipper and storage warehouse organization that handles apples from the Okanogan Valley and the Palmer Lake region.

Rounding out the association's officer group is Immediate Past Chairman John L. Rice of Rice Fruit Company, Gardners, Pa.

USApple members accepted the appointment of nine regular and regional trustees during the association's annual business meeting Aug. 23. The following

USApple members were selected to represent the state and regional producer associations as regional trustees on the board for three-year terms.

■ **Edward (Ned) O'Neill** of Joseph P. Sullivan & Company, Ayers, Mass., representing District 1 (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York and New Jersey);

■ **Dave Benner** of El Vista Orchards, Fairfield, Penn., representing District 2 (Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee);

■ **Julia Hersey** of Hersey Brothers, Casnovia, Mich., representing District 3 (Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas);

■ **Chris Britton** of BK Partners, Riverbank, Calif., representing District Four (Idaho, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, California, Arizona, and Oregon); and

■ **Smith and Edward Kershaw** of Kershaw Fruit Companies, Yakima, Wash., representing District 5 (Washington state).

In addition, the following USApple members were elected to serve a three-year term on USApple's Board of Trustees as a regular trustee.

■ **Jeff Colombini**, Lodi Farming, Stockton, Calif.;

■ **Kenneth Guise**, Knouse Foods Cooperative, Peach Glen, Penn.; and

■ **Robert Price**, Price Cold Storage & Packing Co., Yakima, Wash.

Ed Wittenbach of Wittenbach Orchards, Belding, Mich. retired from USApple's board of trustees

USApple Officers

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(509) 486-2104

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Gardners, Pa.
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after serving six years, including a year as chairman. Danny Day of Sunfair Marketing in Yakima, Wash. and Steven Balderston of Colora Orchards, Colora, Md. also retired from the board after six and three years of service, respectively.

USApple's Board of Trustees consists of 24 industry members, representing apple-producing regions across the country and every segment of the nation's apple industry.

For more information regarding USApple's board and its activities, contact USApple staff by telephone at (800) 781-4443 or (703) 442-8850. ■



DeCA and DSCP Named Merchandiser of the Year

Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) of Fort Lee, Va. and the Defense Supply Center of Philadelphia, Penn. (DSCP), were recognized as top apple merchandiser of the year by USApple's National Apple Month program and *Produce Business* magazine before a nationwide gathering of apple industry leaders attending USApple's Outlook and Marketing Conference in Chicago.

DeCA's Carroll Allred, produce category manager, accepted the award on behalf of the organizations.

DeCA runs the retail part of the business, which generates \$326 million in produce sales annually at 268 commissaries in 16 countries worldwide, and DSCP performs wholesale procurement for the stores.

Apples are a key part of commissaries' produce departments and rank second in produce sales behind bananas at DeCA commissaries. National Apple Month Program Director Kay Swartz Rentzel pointed to the creative and effective merchandising of apples to a global cast of customers, along with the two agencies cooperation that make the organizations deserving of the industry's top merchandising award. Some key initiatives include:

- Preferentially purchase U.S. grown apples for commissaries in the U.S. and abroad.
- Encourage merchandising and promotion of apples with a variety of formats, such as display contests, case lot sales and farmer's market style promotions.
- Network with virtually all state apple associations as well as other industry programs.
- Incorporate apples into point-of-

sale promotions that include recipes, health information, coupons and category management information.

- In the fall, move apple displays to the front of the store and enlarge displays to carry 15 to 18 varieties of apples and 5 to 6 bagged apple products.

- Stretch supply lines to meet individual customer needs. When service personnel in California or Alaska, for example, crave an East Coast Empire, DSCP sources it, and DeCA makes sure it's waiting at the display.

When accepting the award, Allred stated, "We are honored to have been selected from the many retailers nationwide for recognizing the value of apples to the produce department and every consumer shopping our commissaries."

DeCA and DSCP received a commemorative plaque and a check for \$1,000 presented from National Apple Month and *Produce Business* magazine to the Military Aid

Society to assist our nation's military families in need and provide them with healthy and nutritious produce.

"National Apple Month established the Apple Merchandiser of the Year to recognize a retailer each year for their yearlong efforts in promoting apples, and we are very proud to recognize DeCA and DSCP for its outstanding support," said Rentzel.

National Apple Month is the only national, generic apple promotion conducted in the United States. Originally founded in 1904 as National Apple Week, it was expanded in 1996 to a three-month promotional window from September through November.

National Apple Month's mission is to increase apple industry sales, and to enhance consumer awareness and usage of apples and apple products. Its goal is to increase apple industry sales through a fall retail display contest, foodservice promotional contest, and to develop strong relations with retail, foodservice and apple industry members.

For more information on National Apple Month, contact Rentzel at (717) 432-0090 or via email at krentzel@usapple.org. ■



As Apple Merchandiser of the Year, DeCA received \$1,000 for the Military Aid Society. Pictured here (l to r) Eric Nieman of Produce Business Magazine, Carroll Allred of DeCA, Marketing Business Unit and Kay Rentzel, Director of National Apple Month.

Ralph Broetje Earns Apple Grower of the Year Honors

Ralph Broetje of Broetje Orchards in Prescott, Wash. was honored as the Apple Grower of the Year by *American/Western Fruit Grower* magazines and *Cerexagri* at Outlook 2003. Started in 1980, Broetje Orchards is a family run business that includes approximately 5,500 acres of apples and cherries.

Broetje's achievements include developing a successful apple orchard and packing house, and providing extensive quality of life services for his employees and the people of Prescott, Wash. He was instrumental in establishing a day-care for his employees' children and the Vista Hermosa community, a community designed to provide housing to orchard employees. Vista Hermosa has 100 three and four bedroom homes, 28 apartments, a chapel, a gymnasium and a convenience store.

"Ralph's dedication to the (apple) industry extends beyond the



Ralph Broetje accepts his honor.

orchard," said *American Fruit Grower* Managing Editor Brian Sparks. "It means committing to providing a high quality of life for his employees and ensuring that people around the world are able to share in the fruit that his business provides."

Broetje Orchards is operated by Broetje, his wife, Cheryl, and their nine children. ■

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