



Hort Headlines

January 26, 2007

- **Approximately 75 Percent Of California Citrus Crop Harmed By Freeze -** The devastation continues to rise with more than \$800 million worth of California citrus lost during the five-day freeze from January 12-16. Approximately 75 percent of the navel orange crop was still on the trees when the freeze hit. Damage assessment is taking longer than expected, because the weather has not warmed enough to start deterioration of the freeze-damaged fruit. Lemon growers expect next year's production to be affected because many new buds on their trees were destroyed. Citrus exports this year remain unlikely. In California, the citrus industry is the fifth highest revenue-producing commodity. Citrus Mutual, reports that 85 percent of the citrus acres in California are family operations.
- **AgJOBS Introduced In New Congress -** AgJOBS will reform the H-2A agricultural guestworker program and permit undocumented immigrants working in agriculture to stay on the job in the United States if they meet certain conditions. A pilot program to restructure the H-2A temporary agricultural worker program, and help up to 1.5 million farmworkers gain legal status would be set up by AgJOBS. Growers continue to report worker shortages for a number of reasons.
- **Genetically Engineered Insects -** Someday growers might be releasing the very pests they have battled all these years right in their orchards or vineyards. These pests will be slightly different however; they would be genetically engineered to increase the numbers of sterile insects, reducing the number of viable offspring. The USDA recently announced they will prepare a full environmental impact

report evaluating the use of genetically engineered fruit flies and pink bollworm in certain plant pest populations.

- **Pruning And Harvesting Apples Training Videos** - Two training videos were recently produced by Penn State University 's College of Agricultural Sciences for apple growers and their workers. The videos, titled "Apple Harvest Training" and "Pruning & Training Apple Trees," are available in both English and Spanish. The harvest training video addresses appropriate clothing, ladder safety, handling skills, and spot picking, while the pruning video covers basic principles and new strategies for improving fruit quality in modern plantings. To order the video, call 717-334-6271.
- **The International Fruit Tree Association's 50 th Anniversary Celebration** - The International Fruit Tree Association (IFTA) is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year by holding its Annual Conference in Hobart, Tasmania. The conference takes place February 3-7, 2007, and features educational presentations by experts in tree fruit production from around the world. For information, check the web site at www.ifruittree.org.
- **Tree Fruit Day Next Tuesday** - WSHA staff members will be out of the office next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to host our 5th Annual Tree Fruit Day with members in Olympia . The WSHA office will resume regular business hours on Thursday.

Headline Links

A Farm Bill That Serves Us All - No big surprise: As Congress girds to debate a 2007 farm bill, the big commodity interests — cotton, rice, corn, wheat, soybeans — are lining up to protect their billions in subsidies. Read more at the [Seattle Times](#).

Workers Feel Freeze's Sting - California 's citrus packinghouses will shut down in the coming weeks as expectations of finding good fruit dwindle. Unless some Valencia oranges miraculously escaped the damaging freeze, juice plants won't have anything left to squeeze. Visit the [Capital Press](#) for more on this story.

Bush Immigration Reform Plan Welcomed In West, But Energy Plan Is "Ambitious" - President Bush's call for comprehensive immigration reform found support in the West, but his renewable energy plan was called "too ambitious." Read more at the [Capital Press](#).

Bush Makes Pitch For Immigration Reform, Green Energy - President Bush urged Congress to support a comprehensive immigration reform bill and a boost in alternative energy sources, including those coming from farms. Visit the [Capital Press](#) to learn more.

New Passport Rule Goes Into Effect - Americans flying to Mexico , Canada and the Caribbean made sure to bring their passports Monday because of a new rule going into effect Tuesday that requires them to show one to get back into the country. Read more at [NWCN](#).

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