



Hort Headlines

March 6, 2009

- **Fraudulent Letters From U.S. Dot** – According to alerts from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal motor Carrier Safety Administration, trucking companies across the country are apparently the new target of a "phishing" scam. It appears that these scam letters are alleged to be from the DOT and requesting bank account information in order to allow the trucking companies to be eligible for procurement contracts. Remember to always be alert to any letter, e-mail or phone call asking for bank account information.
- **State's Unemployment Rate Up Again** – Washington's unemployment rate for January increased to 7.8 percent, currently higher than the national unemployment rate of 7.6 percent. This is the highest unemployment rate in more than two decades for Washington state. Employment Security Department's chief economist Mary Ayala warned that unless the nation's banking system stabilizes in the next six months and lending resumes to a more normal level, we could potentially hit a 12.5 percent unemployment rate by the end of this year or next year.
- **Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Named** – According to the USDA President Barack Obama has nominated Kathleen A. Merrigan to be the Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. Merrigan currently is an assistant professor and director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment masters and doctoral programs at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston. She holds a doctorate from the Massachusetts Institutes of Technology in

environmental planning and policy, a Master of Public Affairs from the University of Texas and a bachelor's degree from Williams College.

- **Supervisors And Managers Leadership Training** – WFB Employer Services will be conducting a special "Supervisory Skills Labor Management Training for Farm and Packing House Supervisor's" in Spanish and English. Training will take place on March 10 and 11 in Wenatchee (Spanish and English) and Warden (Spanish Only). The Spanish training is geared towards first level supervisors while the English language training will be for mid level managers. Sign up today space is limited! Visit www.wsfb.com to learn more or [download the flyer](#).
- **Pest Management Workshops In Spanish** – WSU Chelan County Extension will be providing a Pest Management Workshop in Spanish on March 17, from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Wenatchee Valley College Lyceum. The workshop will cover "Competitive Orchard Systems," "Pest Management Transition Project," and "Understanding and Management of Fireblight." Two recertification credits will be earned for this workshop. For more information contact Esteban Gutierrez at (509) 667-6665 or email este@wsu.edu.
- **Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Program Dates** – Throughout the Pacific Northwest farm producers are becoming more familiar with risk management tools that insure farm revenue fluctuations. Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-L) and Adjusted Gross Revenue Pilot (AGR) are insurance plans that use producer's five-year tax information and annual farm reports to provide guaranteed revenue for the insurance period. February 2, is the final date to obtain or change AGR & AGR-Lite for existing policy-holders. March 16, is the final date to enroll in a new AGR-Lite policy. For crop insurance agent information, visit www3.rma.usda.gov/tools/agents.
- **Find Out How Cold It Will Be In Your Area** – Fruit growers can get detailed information on frost conditions online at www.clearwest.com and beginning in mid-March available from a telephone recording for the Yakima, Wenatchee, Okanogan, and Basin Districts. Forecasts will run through May 31.
- **WSHA New Web-Site** – WSHA is proud to announce the launch of our newly re-designed web-site. Check out the new [WSHA Website](#) and remember to add it to your favorites! Current and new members will need to register to access the member's only section.

Headline Links

WSU Extension Loss Would Be Big Blow To Local Fruit Industry – It's hard to put a dollar value on Washington State University Extension's contributions to North Central Washington's rural economies. Learn more at [the Wenatchee World](#).

Two Food-Safety Bills To Mandate New Produce Safety Standards – Two bills introduced in Congress this month would set new food-safety standards for fresh produce, but both allow leeway in setting those standards. Learn more on this story from [*the Produce News*](#).

USDA Toughens Oversight Of Organic Fertilizer – Federal regulators announced a new enforcement strategy meant to stop manufacturers from passing off synthetic fertilizers as organic. Read more at [*the Sacramento Bee*](#).

Ag Leaders Oppose Direct Payment Cut Obama Seeks – With farm leaders opposing President Obama's budget proposal to phase out direct payments for farmers with more than \$500,000 sales, the idea seems dead on arrival on Capitol Hill, but Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is still trying to promote the idea. Read the following article at [*the Capital Press*](#).

Federal Funds To Boost Ag Exports May Be Reduced – Yakima Valley growers don't oppose an end to big-farm subsidies proposed by President Barack Obama in his new budget, but they are worried about cuts to a program that helps them export tree fruit and other specialty crops. Visit [*the Yakima-Herald*](#) to learn more.

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