



Hort Headlines

June 5, 2009

- **The Goals of GRAS²P Grower Response to Agricultural, Safe, and Sustainable Practices** – GRAS²P is a comprehensive grower program implementing economic, environmental, and educational production practices. Public confidence and retention of tree fruit consumption will be assured through the development of tree fruit specific food safety and sustainability standards. GRAS²P is not another audit program; it is an audit readiness program to help prepare Washington tree fruit growers for third party, independent audits. In addition, GRAS²P will be used to direct regulatory and legislative efforts and to respond to market and consumer issues through practical, science-based methods. If you are a grower or warehouse interested in participating in the GRAS²P pilot program, please contact the WSHA office to enroll in GRAS²P at (509) 665.9641 or email gras2p@wahort.org.
- **Federal Department of Labor Conducting Inspections** – Beginning the week of June 15, the federal Department of Labor will be conducting inspections in Okanogan County. They are interested in making sure people are complying with the laws, not necessarily in generating revenue through fines. The Farm Bureau Employer Deskbook has detailed instructions on how to prepare for this inspection, and includes the actual checklists that inspectors use. To purchase a deskbook, please contact Kim Bresler at kbresler@wsfb.com. The instructions and checklists are also available free of charge on their website, at: www.wsfb.com If you have specific questions, please contact Kim Bresler at 360-528-2917.

- **2009 May Bring Record Cherry Crop** – Industry officials and shippers remain confident that a record cherry crop is on the horizon for Washington State and confident there will be sufficient demand. According to the Washington Field Office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Washington's crop is estimated at 180,000 tons, up 80 percent from last year. NASS reported, if the projection holds true, the crop will be 7 percent larger than the 2006 record of 168,000 tons. Cherry trees are now in full blossom with the season running from June through the third week of August. July will be the prime month for cherries. Northwest cherries bring nearly \$600 million into the Northwest and are shipped to more than 62 countries abroad. Northwest sweet cherries account for more than half of the nation's supply.
- **California Discovers New Cherry Pest** – In Northern California the cherry fruit fly, has been discovered and could threaten a variety of commodities. The pest has been tentatively identified as a drosophilid fruit fly of unknown genus and species said officials. Typically these flies are associated with damaged or decaying fruit and referred to as vinegar flies. Growers are beginning to apply protective sprays to guard against infestation of the main "Bing" crop. The pest has also shown itself in the Northern San Joaquin Valley and it is currently unknown if other fruits are susceptible. The species of drosophila has yet to be confirmed by the CDFA. Currently, the pest has only been discovered in a handful of counties and infestation has been limited to cherry orchards.
- **FREE Web Series Addressing Issues of "Ag In Uncertain Times"** – The Western Extension Committee will be presenting an interactive online webinar series on a variety of issues in an effort to help agricultural producers and other professionals better understand and deal with today's changing economy. The title of the series is "Ag in Uncertain Times," and the series will present multiple online sessions during the months of June and September – December. The sessions are hosted by Montana State University. For additional information and details visit msuextensionconnect.org or email westrme@wsu.edu. No pre-reservation is required however each session is limited to 500 participants on a first-come basis.
- **REMINDER: Take Precautions To Avoid Heat Exposure** – With the hot weather on the way, orchard supervisors are reminded to consider various work-flow strategies to prevent and guard against heat-related illnesses. It's important that employers train and protect employees who work outdoors in the heat. A key element during hot weather is to encourage your workforce to drink plenty of water or other acceptable beverages (non-caffeinated) as well as knowing the signs and symptoms of heat stress, pacing your work, taking breaks and wearing lightweight clothing. Heat related illness can result in serious medical conditions, including disability or death. For more information about preventing heat stress, visit the L&I Heat Stress prevention web site www.lni.wa.gov.

- **Specialty Crop Grants Available** – Applications are being accepted by the USDA in the 50 states to submit applications for grant funds under the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program-Farm Bill. Approximately \$49 million in block grants will be awarded by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in an effort to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture). The deadline for applications to be received is NO later than August 26, 2009. Visit www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ or call Trista Etzig at (202) 690-4942 or email trista.etzig@usda.gov
- **Online Food Resource Site Launched By Food Safety Group** – The White House Food Safety Working Group has set up an online food safety information site for consumers and those working in the area. The comprehensive improvement of the national food safety network will link regulatory actions with public health outcomes said the USDA. View the site at www.foodsafetyworkinggroup.gov.
- **Burger King Apple "Fries" Move Into Retail Market** – In 2007, Burger King's Apple Fries joined the menu of the fast food chain and are now moving into the retail market with the apple fries hitting 10,000 supermarkets by this fall. According to the Wall Street Journal, you can expect to see the fries sold in Burger King Frypods in the produce section of the stores. Accompanying the fresh apple fries will be low-fat caramel dipping sauce that is packaged in pouches like a condiment.
- **Tee Off For Student Scholarships** – Teams are filling up fast this year for our 16th Annual WSHA Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament that will be held on **Tuesday, August 4, 2009** at the Lake Chelan Municipal Golf Course. Link to the [WSHA web-site](#) and download a WSHA Golf Tournament Registration form today. This year's event is sure to be another big success with tree fruit industry golfers playing to benefit student scholarships in the name (and memory) of past tree fruit industry leaders. Put your company name in the spotlight by becoming a tournament sponsor by contacting Lynette at lynette@wahort.org to learn more.

Headline Links

Farm Bureau Briefing Aids Member with ICE Encounter – A Farm Bureau member was recently visited by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Visit the Farm Bureau [to learn more about this encounter](#).

US-Mex Border Fence Completion Eludes Government – Nearly six months after the U.S.-Mexico border fence ordered by the Bush administration was supposed to be finished, its completion is in limbo while a judge waits answers to

questions about private property in the fence's path. Learn more on this story from [Yahoo News](#).

Immigration Reform Dealing With Ag Work Force Not Coming – Immigration reform to assure Washington agriculture a legal work force likely won't happen this year in Congress, state officials said last Friday near the conclusion of a visit to the nation's capital to meet with cabinet-level agencies. Learn more on this story from [the Yakima Herald](#).

Immigration Initiative Petitions Inserted In Four Newspapers – Illegal immigration opponents are paying for their petitions to be sent to newspaper subscribers in at least three Washington counties this week with a goal of gathering more signatures for a statewide initiative. Read more at [the Herald](#) or [the Yakima Herald](#).

Basin City Group Opposes Farmworker Housing Plan – About 25 residents of rural Franklin County attended the county commission meeting Monday to oppose plans to develop a housing facility for seasonal farmworkers southwest of Basin City. Read the following article at [the Tri-City Herald](#).

Forecasters Say El Niño May Be Developing – Sea-surface temperatures have been warming in the tropical Pacific Ocean, suggesting the potential for the development of the El Niño climate phenomenon this summer, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Read the following article at [the Capital Press](#).

Emptied But Not Wasted: Recycling Ag Plastics – Out on the farmland, those plastic containers used to ship and hold pesticides can really pile up. Read the following article at [the Yakima Herald](#)

Fed Survey Sees Signs Recession Is Easing – The economy's sharp slide eased in the late spring and hopes for future business activity improved, suggesting that the worst of the recession has passed. Read the following article at [the SF Gate](#).

Lower Crop Supplies Could Mean Higher Food Prices – Crop prices could rise this year because of dwindling supplies of U.S. corn and soybeans, raising fears of grain shortages and higher food costs for consumers. Read the following article at [the Globe Gazette](#).