



Hort Headlines

August 15, 2008

- **Apple Crop Predictions Forecast Robust Harvest** –The Washington state apple industry released its annual estimate for the 2008 apple crop. According to industry officials Washington's fresh market apple production is estimated at 99.6 million boxes, the third largest crop on record. The projected harvest has increased nearly 1 percent more than last year's crop of 98.5 million boxes. The USDA projections are more optimistic, forecasting a 4-percent larger crop than last year. Season-to-date prices should remain strong at a record high of approximately \$20 a box. The cool spring weather has delayed harvest approximately eight to 10 days. In 2004 the record crop was 104.9 million boxes.

Following are predictions for other fruit crops:

- Bartlett pears, 408,000 tons, 4 percent lower than last year's harvest.
 - Peaches 17,000 tons, an 8 percent drop over 2007.
 - Wine grapes: 6 percent higher than 2007 for a record high of 135,000 tons.
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- **Organic Apple Crop Expected to Double 2007 Yield** – The production of organic apples is expected to be nearly twice what it was in 2007. The Washington state apple industry predicts a yield of approximately 6.0 million boxes compared to 3.6 million in 2007. The Wenatchee estimate is 3.7 million boxes compared to 2.4 million the previous year.
 - **Fruit & Vegetable Food Safety Audits Intensifying In Washington** – The Washington State Department of Agriculture is conducting a growing number of

audits using USDA Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices. WSDA auditors verify that growers and processors are following best management practices to reduce the risk of microbial contamination of fresh produce. More than 128,000 acres of Washington produce were audited last year, up from 10,200 in 2005. Although the audits remain voluntary, an increasing number of national wholesalers and retailers require GAP/GHP certification as they source their food products. Federal nutrition programs, including the school lunch program began requiring the audits last year, and many international buyers are looking for proof that audits were conducted. More information about GAP/GHP audits can be found at: www.agr.wa.gov/Inspection/FVInspection.

- **Deadline Nears For Dam inspection** – The Department of Ecology's Dam Safety Office has been scanning aerial photos throughout the state to locate unpermitted reservoirs of 2 acres or more that may hold at least 10 acre-feet (3.26 million gallons) of water. To date, 594 have been located. September 1, is the deadline for owners of small reservoirs that were build without permits to report their dams for safety inspections and avoid possible fines. The safety review has already identified "significant" or "high hazard" dams in 31 of Washington state's 39 counties. Yakima County leads the top five with 48 potentially hazardous unpermitted dams. To contact Ecology's Dam Safety Office call 360-407-6623 or e-mail: djsd461@ecy.wa.
- **Remember To Vote August 19** – Washington state's first top-two primary election will be held Tuesday. In 2004, voters approved Initiative 872, which set up the new nominating system, which also is used in Montana. Voters do not have to choose a Democrat or Republican ballot, but may vote for candidates of any party in any race on the ballot. The top two vote getters in each race, regardless of party, will advance to the General Election in November. On the national front, if you haven't already, please make sure that you are registered to vote in this year's presidential election. Every vote counts! Learn more at <http://www.secstate.wa.gov> and [what you need to know](#).
- **Food Science Departments Merge To Create New School** – Washington State University and the University of Idaho will merge their food science departments into a new school. The universities are searching for a new director for the School of Food Science who will work for both universities. The new partnership will benefit the Northwest's \$17-billion food processing industry. The two Palouse campuses, just eight miles apart, already share many resources. Students will take required food science courses at each institution. Their diplomas will be awarded by their home universities.
- **Have You Renewed Your WSHA Membership** – WSHA membership invoices have been mailed out to all members. If you have not yet received your invoice please contact WSHA membership coordinator Vicki Young at 509-665-9641 x817 or email vicki@wahort.org. Remember, it is important to renew your WSHA membership promptly. Membership is required in order to register and attend the WSHA 104th Annual Meeting and Trade Show that will take place this December 1, 2 & 3 in Yakima, Washington. Thank you in advance for your membership investment.

Headline Links

Feds: Common Pesticides Jeopardize Salmon Survival – Three pesticides commonly used on farms and orchards throughout the West are jeopardizing the survival of Pacific salmon, the federal agency in charge of saving the fish from extinction has found. Learn more about this story at the [Capital Press](#).

Pass The Sunscreen, The Fruits And Veggies Are Burning – Just like people damage their skin in the sun, fruits and vegetables can also get nasty burns. That's why farmers are increasingly applying sunscreen to their crops to prevent skin blistering, heat stress and blemishes. Read more at [Wenatchee World](#).

BIOFUELS: Making Ethanol 'Lemonade' Out Of Bruised Peaches And Orange Scraps – The self-proclaimed "Tastier Peach State," otherwise known as South Carolina, may be on the cusp of taking its luscious, plentiful resource and putting a form of it into your car's gas tank. Read the following article at www.eenews.com.

State Farmworkers Face Low Quality Of Life, Study Finds – From living out of cars to rodent-plagued cabins, Washington farmworkers interviewed for a new survey offer a glimpse into the quality of life for many of the more than 170,000 people who form the backbone of the state's large agricultural sector. Visit the [Seattle PI](#) to learn more.

Stemilt Growers And The Douglas Family Rely On Natural Farming Techniques To Grow Premium Washington Peaches And Nectarines – For the Douglas family of Pasco, Washington the decision to transition their entire peach and nectarine crop to organic production came from a strong desire to provide consumers with flavorful fruit and one-of-a-kind eating experience. Read the following article at the [Fresh Plaza](#).

Brewster Fruit-Packing Facility Will Be Rebuilt After Fire – Gebbers Farms plans to rebuild the Apple House Warehouse and Storage, a Brewster fruit-packing facility that was destroyed by fire Sunday, a company official said this morning. Read more at [Wenatchee World](#).

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