



## Hort Headlines

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October 2, 2009

- **Essential Training—Excellence in Employee Relations** – The Washington Farm Bureau is conducting training sessions in October titled "Excellence in Employee Relations". Owners and senior managers are encouraged to attend. Presenter Tim Bernasek, partner, Dunn Carney Allen, Higgins, and Tongue, LLP will provide you with a clear understanding of the federal and state laws that impact your ability to communicate to workers. Tim's expertise is in agricultural labor and employment. How are your employee labor relations? Join this informative discussion to learn proper supervisory techniques, fair treatment of workers and more. \$50.00 for WSHA members to attend. Price includes seminar materials and refreshments. To sign up visit [www.wsfb.com](http://www.wsfb.com) or call (360) 528-2916. The Sessions will be held:

**Tuesday, Oct. 20:**

Sunnyside 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. at Snipes Restaurant (905 Yakima Valley Hwy)

Pasco 1:30 p.m.—3:30 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel (2525 N. 20th Avenue)

**Wednesday, Oct 21:**

Moses Lake 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. at the Best Western Inn (3000 Marina Drive)

- **Door Left Open By Washington Gov. For Higher Taxes** – The attached article from this morning's Seattle Times is an attention grabber. The best guess at present is that by the time the Legislature meets next year there could be a \$1 billion shortfall in revenues for programs during the current biennium. Either cut existing programs further or raise taxes...or if you prefer the euphemism 'find alternative funding sources.' It is an ominous warning from the governor's office; we must be prepared to fend off tax hikes directed at an already reeling tree fruit industry facing a disaster of a 2009 cherry season, a 2008 apple crop of record size and a 2009 pear and apple crop that may also be near record crops. We can ill afford further hits to grower's pocket books. Our just concluded Legislative tour was a good first step in the process of educating our lawmakers. Read more at [the Seattle Times](#).
- **No Increase For Washington's Minimum Wage Next Year** – The state's minimum wage of \$8.55 per hour, currently the highest in the country, won't go up because increases are tied to the Consumer Price Index, which declined in the past year. This is the first time since the initiative passed that there is no increase in the state's minimum wage. Employers may continue using the current minimum wage poster for another year. The CPI-W decreased 1.9 percent during the 12 month period ending in August, compared to a 5.9 percent increase during the same period in 2008, which led to a 48-cents-an-hour increase in the 2009 minimum wage. For more information on Washington's minimum wage visit [www.Lni.wa.gov](http://www.Lni.wa.gov) or call 1-866-219-7321.
- **2009 Fruit Chemical Use Survey** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be contacting fruit growers this fall to participate in the 2009 Fruit Chemical Use Survey. NASS will survey growers in an effort to gather information on pesticides and fertilizers used, acres treated, and rates applied to more than 20 fruit crops in 12 states. The last Fruit Chemical Use Survey was conducted in 2005 and recently reinstated to meet grower and consumer demand for the data. The new survey should provide information on current crop production practices used in the U.S. The survey results should help clarify the facts about chemical use in agriculture. All information provided by respondents for the NASS surveys is confidential by law. Survey results will be published in the Fruit Chemical Usage report in July 2010. Visit [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov) for more information.
- **WSU Receives USDA Grants** – More than \$15 million in USDA grants has been awarded to Washington State University for specialty crop research. Nearly one-third of the \$47.3 million was received by the university, placing it among the top recipients in the country. The WSU grant includes \$3.8 million for stem-free sweet cherry research and \$3.1 million for hop and mint crop research. Additional research areas include biodegradable mulches, fruit breeding, pests and pesticide applications. USDA started its Specialty Crop Research Initiative in 2008 to target research funding to "specialty crops," which include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts,

dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops. In the past designated research funds had not been available for these crops, unlike the long-established programs for commodity crops such as wheat, corn and soybeans.

- **2009 WSHA Annual Meeting—Conference Kick Off WILD HOCKEY** – Join industry friends for a fun-filled evening cheering on the conference champion Wenatchee Wild as they take on the Robertson Cup winners in fast-paced NAHL hockey action. Proceeds from ticket pre-sales will benefit the Washington Apple Education Foundation. Don't miss out on this opportunity to network with peers and support the industry's charity! Sunday, December 6, 2009 at the Town Toyota Center located in Wenatchee. Game time: 5:05pm. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://www.waef.org>.
- **Miller Travel Grant Applications Now Being Accepted** – Applications are now being accepted for the Charles J. Miller Memorial Travel & Study Grant. Qualified fruit industry fieldmen, extension workers or other fruit industry service personnel of North Central Washington are welcome to apply. The deadline for application submissions is November 16, 2009. Link to the Charles J. Miller Travel & Study Grant Announcement to [download an application](#). If you have additional questions email [lynette@wahort.org](mailto:lynette@wahort.org).
- **Poster Session Invitation** – The call for poster presenters is now underway as part of the 105th Washington State Horticultural Association Annual Meeting and Postharvest conference. The poster session for this year's meeting will take place at the Wenatchee Convention Center December 7, 8, & 9. If you would like to participate as a poster presenter please submit your request to [pmpt.info@wsu.com](mailto:pmpt.info@wsu.com) by **November 13, 2009**. For more information download the [poster presenter invitation](#).
- **WSHA 105th Annual Meeting Information is Now On-Line** – The Washington State Horticultural Association's 105th Annual Meeting program guide, registration form and lodging guide are now available on the WSHA web-site at [www.wahort.org](http://www.wahort.org). The theme this year is "**Resilient Growers – Facing Challenges, Leading Changes.**" Don't miss the largest educational conference in the nation dedicated to tree fruit industry issues December 7, 8, and 9 – sign up to attend today! To register contact Nicole Brunner at 509-665-9641 or email [nicole@wahort.org](mailto:nicole@wahort.org).
- **NW Hort Expo Contact Information** – If you have not received information about the upcoming NW Hort Expo or booked space for your booth please contact Dawn Milne at (509) 784-0357 or email [dmilnetime2ride@verizon.net](mailto:dmilnetime2ride@verizon.net). The NW Hort Expo is held in conjunction with the 105th WSHA Annual Meeting.

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## Headline Links

**USDA Report Examines Organic Sector's 'Revamped Marketing'** – The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has compiled a report on the marketing of organic food, which it says aims to respond to a dearth of information on the fast-changing sector. Learn more at [the Food Navigator](#).

**Organic Foods Are Now 'Mainstream', Says USDA** – Organic food has entered the mainstream with strong growth in all sectors over the past decade, including packaged and prepared foods and beverages, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). Learn more at [the Food Navigator](#).

**Defense Plans Needed To Combat Food Terrorism** – US food processors and manufacturers are being urged to implement defense plans to protect products from deliberate contamination by terrorists or disgruntled employees. Learn more on this story from [the Food Navigator](#).

**Million To One Apple Is Half Red Half Green** – Experts believe that the odds of finding an apple with such a perfect line between the green and the red are more than a million to one. Learn more on this story from [Growing Produce](#).

**Food Prices Could Triple With Climate Change: Report** – Food prices could more than triple by 2050 as the climate changes, according to a new report from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Learn more on this story from [the Food Navigator](#).

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