

NHC NEWS

A Monthly Bulletin of the Northwest Horticultural Council

A PEACH

While most attention within the Pacific Northwest's tree fruit industry is commonly cast on three commercial crops—apples, pears, and cherries—other fruits, though smaller in terms of production acreage, are quite important as well. Peaches, for example.

The annual combined value of peach production in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington is about \$21 million dollars. Washington and Idaho each usually are somewhere at the lower end of annual top-ten lists of peach growing states, with California always comfortably at the top.

Most of the federal issues worked on by the Northwest Horticultural Council are of just as much importance to peach growers as their fellow fruit growers—as examples, those related to immigration, food safety and pesticides. Occasionally, we engage in a project with the sole targeted motive of helping simply the peach industry. An illustration being phytosanitary and trade policy work now underway in conjunction with USDA's Plant Protection and Quarantine program with the goal of opening Mexico's sometimes less than permeable border to fresh peaches harvested in the Pacific Northwest.

And, the Northwest Horticultural Council is a long-time member of the National Peach Council, a voluntary commodity association that in January underwent a change of leadership, with the capable Kay Rentzel taking over as managing director from Charles Walker, who had retired. The Peach Council's office is now based in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania.

While dollars and acreages often define a crop for soulless clerks in the countinghouse of agricultural

economics, one should keep in mind the joy this fruit brings to people. Dr. Samuel Johnson, of 18th century London, was reported to be clearly on the rebound from depression when he indulged as follows: "Now, if he wished—he quite often did—he could gorge himself on peaches before breakfast. Slowly, he began to mend."



FOOD SAFETY

Peanut Corporation of America filed for bankruptcy in February amidst a storm of public outrage over its apparent many failures in controlling the pathogen *Salmonella*.

The national public health outbreak involving a multitude of processed peanut products and causing several deaths has served to raise the long simmering federal policy issue of food safety reform to a boil.

Food safety issues such as the government's ready access to the results of private laboratory tests; traceability; a new single federal food agency; required food safety plans for all companies placing food into interstate commerce; mandatory federal recall authority; and new criminal penalties are sure to be front and center as the 111th Congress considers new and comprehensive legislation.

It will be vital for all members of the nation's fresh produce industry to be fully engaged in this public debate. Measures based on the best current science that, if implemented, would serve to enhance the safety of our food supply should be supported. Measures driving up the economic costs of doing business but leading to no improvement to ultimate food safety should be opposed.

While effective food safety advances should be backed by the tree fruit industry, it needs to be kept in mind by policy makers and the general public that there is no perfect health system and that some degree of human illness will occur regardless of the protective requirements devised.

And finally all should keep at the forefront of their thinking, as Dr. Johnson did, peaches—and other fresh fruits—are good for you.



Travel

Christian Schlect

March 20 – Meeting of Washington tree fruit industry executives, Ellensburg, Washington.

March 25-29 – United States Apple Association's spring committee and board meetings, Washington, D.C.

Mike Willett

March 16-21 – North American Plant Protection Organization's Fruit Panel meeting, Uruapan, Michoacan, Mexico

Deborah Carter

March 12-13 – Washington State Department of Ecology 2009 Wastewater General Fruit Packing Permit Public Hearings, Yakima and Wenatchee, Washington.

She was even less pleased when Wilkes invited Thrale to what she described as a 'Dinner of Rakes'. Beauclerk was to be there, and so was the Earl of Kellie, a dilettante Scottish composer known for his coarse sense of humor and heavy drinking – Samuel Foote said that the sight of his florid complexion would ripen peaches.

Ian McIntyre

Hester:

The Remarkable Life of
Dr. Johnson's 'Dear Mistress'

The Northwest Horticultural Council represents the deciduous tree fruit industry of Idaho, Oregon and Washington on national and international policy matters of interest to growers and shippers. Its full and associate members are:

- *Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers*
- *Fruit Growers League*
- *Idaho Apple Commission*
- *Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*
- *Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service*
- *Washington Apple Commission*
- *Washington State Fruit Commission*
- *Washington Tree Fruit Research Comm.*
- *Wenatchee Valley Traffic Assn.*
- *Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Assn.*

The NHC also advises the Fresh Pear Committee (Portland) on certain issues related to food safety, crisis control and international trade.



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