

Quinoa gains a foothold in E. Idaho

Growers experiment with crop native to South America

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

AMERICAN FALLS, Idaho — Growers in Eastern Idaho are experimenting with quinoa this season, enticed by strong prices for the high-protein, gluten-free crop.

Jeremiah Clark, owner of an Idaho Falls-based seed-cleaning business, first became interested in quinoa three years ago, when doctors recommended it for his son, who has celiac disease. Celiac sufferers cannot eat foods that have gluten.

Last season, Clark had a small quinoa acreage under contract in Montana and worked with a Grace, Idaho, grower to raise 20 acres. The Montana crop was too poor to harvest. Though the Grace crop was badly sprout-damaged by wet weather, Clark salvaged enough seed to plant 400 acres this season.

This spring, about Idaho 14 growers — in Soda Springs,



Submitted by Jeremiah Clark
Growers in Eastern Idaho are experimenting with small acreages of quinoa this season.

Preston, American Falls and Blackfoot — will raise small fields of quinoa for Clark, mostly under irrigation. Two growers will raise organic quinoa. He's also working with two Montana growers.

He'll pay \$1 per pound and anticipates yields could approach 2,000 pounds per acre. Though growers assume a risk by planting an untested crop for the region, Clark noted, "Wheat prices are kind of low this year,

and there's a real high upside with quinoa."

Quinoa is popular among "foodies" and others who avoid gluten. Though most of it is grown in the Andes region of South America, some is grown in Colorado and parts of the Northwest.

Farming inputs to raise quinoa are comparable with wheat, Clark said.

Buyers including the Scoular Co. have expressed interest in Clark's quinoa, but he may opt to market it under his own American Mills brand. His father, who owns a mill in Bancroft, Idaho, offered the use of his facilities, or to sell equipment Clark could modify.

Clark started with a multi-colored blend of common quinoa varieties from Colorado, sorting out the white seeds to clean and provide to growers. He's also developing his own quinoa varieties adapted to Idaho's climate, planting seed raised in an Idaho field and propagating his best seedlings. He's increasing seed from two of his own white varieties and a red variety, naming them for his children Eli, Kailey and Emily.

Clark intends to grow seed-

lings of his new varieties in an Oregon greenhouse, transplanting them with a specialized machine into a 7-acre field in Blackfoot to increase his seed. Next season, he hopes his growers will plant up to 6,000 acres of his varieties.

American Falls farmer Kamen Koopin will test 45 acres of quinoa this season, planted under four small pivots to test the crop in sandy, sandy-silt and silt-loam soils.

Koopin plans to treat fields prior to planting with the pre-emergence herbicide Sonalan understanding "there's not a lot you can spray on the crop during the season for broadleaf weeds. He'll likely spray Select for grasses. Koopin likes that quinoa shouldn't be a host for nematodes, offers a good price and has a deep tap root. Like safflower and canola, quinoa could be a good option for Koopin to avoid consecutive years of grain in his rotation.

"If we get 1,000 pounds per acre, it compares well with corn, but with way less inputs," Koopin said. "I think it's got potential to catch on. It's just figuring out how to grow it."

Wood River well users face water call

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

BELLEVUE, Idaho — Blaine County well irrigators plan to form groundwater districts to better respond to the first water delivery call ever filed against them by senior surface water users.

The call was filed in late February by 63 surface users, drawing from the lower Little Wood River system and the Big Wood River system below Magic Reservoir.

The Idaho Department of Water Resources anticipates serving notice of the call to 450-500 potentially affected groundwater users.

About 190 large agricultural irrigators — farming within the triangle bounded by Bellevue, Picabo and the intersection of U.S.-20 and Idaho State Highway 75 — plan a May election for one groundwater district. Smaller irrigators elsewhere in the county, including large residences, golf courses, small ranches and Sun Valley Ski Resort, will vote on a second district in November.

The agricultural users, who raise mostly alfalfa and barley, draw about 500 cubic feet per second of water, about two-thirds more water than users in the other planned district, said Pat McMahon,

general manager of the Sun Valley Water and Sewer District.

McMahon said groundwater district fees will be assessed to members based on the volume of their water rights, and those who elect not to participate won't be covered under any mitigation plan that may be approved to resolve the call.

Idaho's water laws grant priority to irrigators with the oldest water rights, and surface rights involved in the call predate the earliest wells.

"There's definitely been some effects on the natural flows from a combination of things," said Lynn Harmon, Big Wood Canal Co. general manager. "Part is the weather conditions, but a good portion is also depletion of the aquifer from pumping upstream."

Kevin Lakey, watermaster for Water District 37, which includes both the groundwater users and surface users, said springs flows into the system have dipped to record lows recently, and many surface irrigators had to lease Snake River water to finish their crops last season.

"The most senior decrees on the Little Wood system usually run through September. Last summer, they went off on July 19," Lakey said.

Wanapum Dam repairs nearing completion

Reservoir refilling to normal levels after a year

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

EPHRATA, Wash. — Wanapum Dam reservoir on the Columbia River is returning to normal levels after being lowered for more than a year for \$69 million in repairs to a crack in the dam.

The reservoir level was raised 17 feet in late November and early De-



Capital Press file photo
Wanapum Dam hydroelectric project on the Columbia River south of Vantage, Wash., opened in 1963 and is operated by Grant County Public Utility District. The dam has a rated capacity of 1.038 million kilowatts.

ember. Raising the level another nine feet began March 16 and should

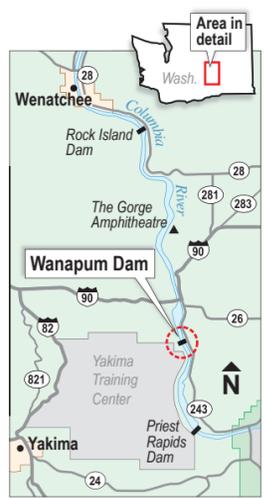
be completed in seven to 14 days, said Chuck Allen, spokesman for Grant County Public Utility District, which operates the dam.

A 65-foot-long crack, 2 inches wide at its widest point, was discovered at the base of the dam Feb. 27, 2014. The PUD lowered reservoir levels 26 to 30 feet while investigating and repairing the dam. The PUD determined the concrete dam's inability to withstand five decades of water pressure due to a design miscalculation, causing the crack.

The 1,092-megawatt hydroelectric dam was opened in 1963 and cost \$93.3 million to build.

The next reservoir upriver, behind the Rock Island Dam, also had to be lowered and orchardists had to extend irrigation intakes along both reservoirs to obtain water.

Wanapum Dam was stabilized by drilling 37 shafts 16 inches in diameter from the top of the dam down more than 185 feet into bedrock below. Tendons 200 to 250 feet long and 12 inches in diameter were fed into the shafts, grouted into bedrock at



Capital Press graphic

the bottom and stretched taut with 2.5 million pounds of pressure, Allen said. Each tendon is made up of 61 steel cables. The tendons are inside watertight sheaths, allowing them to expand and contract, and are capped at the top.

Tendon installation was finished in early March and remaining work will be finished in June, Allen said. Recreation sites along the reservoir, closed for a year, will reopen this spring, he said.

At the peak, 120 people worked on the project, Allen said. Kuney-Goebel, of Spokane, was the contractor. Repairs, associated costs and partial loss of power generation were initially estimated at \$61 million but now are estimated at \$69 million, Allen said.

Two-thirds of the cost is borne by a new bond issue, he said. A previously scheduled rate increase averaging 2 percent across all rate classes went into effect Jan. 1 for the PUD's 45,000-plus customers.



Gordon King/Yakima Herald-Republic/Associated Press

Washington State Supreme Court Chief Justice Barbara Madsen, center, questions an attorney March 17 at Heritage University in Toppenish, Wash. Justices are being asked to require farmers to pay farmworkers additional money for rest breaks. They focused on how practical such an arrangement would be during a public session in Central Washington.

Supreme Court hears arguments in Sakuma rest break case

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Washington Supreme Court justices Tuesday peppered lawyers with questions about farm practices and economic theory in a closely watched case that could dictate whether piece-rate farmworkers in the state will be paid separately for rest breaks.

An attorney for berry pickers at Sakuma Brothers Farms argued that workers should have an incentive to rest, knowing they will be paid based on how much they normally pick in 10 minutes. Piece-rate workers are paid based on how much fruit they pick.

Sakuma, a berry growing and processing company in Burlington, Wash., asserts piece-rate pay compensates workers for rest breaks.

A ruling would likely set a precedent for other agricultural employers. Farm groups, business associations, labor organizations and civil rights activists have filed briefs with the court stating their positions.

The workers' attorney, Marc Cote, told justices that the rules that ensure paid breaks

for non-agricultural employees should apply to piece-rate farmworkers. Farm laborers in particular should have an incentive to rest because they do "grueling, physical work in the elements for hours at a time," Cote said.

Sakuma's lawyer, Adam Belzberg, said the company protects workers by summoning them out of the fields for mandatory rest breaks.

Justice Charles Wiggins asked whether workers are ever asked to skip breaks to get in rapidly ripening fruit.

"No, breaks are always taken," Belzberg said.

Cote said workers alleged in a federal class-action lawsuit that breaks weren't made available. The case was settled out of court before a trial. Sakuma admitted to no labor violations.

Justices repeatedly turned to whether piece-rate pay actually covers 10-minute breaks every four hours.

Belzberg said piece-rate workers were "absolutely" compensated for rest breaks. He said paying workers separately would amount to "extra pay."

Cote said that even if paid rest breaks were somehow calculated into piece rates, workers still need separate compensation to ensure breaks are taken.

The dispute over whether the company enforces rest breaks and factors them in when calculating pieces-rates highlights that the case went to the Supreme Court without an established body of facts determined at a trial.

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NOTICE OF OREGON BLUEBERRY COMMISSION PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

TO: ALL OREGON BLUEBERRY PRODUCERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 12:00 noon at Chemeketa Events at Winema, Room 210, 4001 Winema Place NE, Salem, Oregon, upon a proposed budget for operation of the Oregon Blueberry Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. At this hearing any producer of Oregon Blueberries has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Oregon Blueberry Commission business office, 4093 12th Street Cutoff SE, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

12-1/#4

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NOTICE OF OREGON MINT COMMISSION BUDGET HEARING

TO: ALL OREGON MINT GROWERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Thursday, April 9, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., at the Hood River Hotel, 102 Oak Street, Hood River, Oregon upon a proposed budget for operation of the Mint Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. At this hearing any producer of Mint oil has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Oregon Mint Commission business office, 4093 12th Street Cutoff SE, P.O. Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

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SAGE Fact #112
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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Oregon Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC) will hold its regular quarterly meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Oregon Department of Agriculture, 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, OR 97301. The meeting agenda covers SWCC reports, advisor reports, Soil and Water Conservation District programs and funding, Agriculture Water Quality Management Program updates, and other agenda items.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact Sandi Hiatt at (503) 986-4704, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

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PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87 Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 3/24/2015. The sale will be held at 10:00 am by VISUAL DIESEL 12142 SKY LANE, AURORA, OR 2002 Ford Excursion SUV VIN=1FMSU41F3YEC33274 Amount due on lien \$17,245.25 Reputed owner(s) Robert Tomlinson