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DROUGHT

Washington's worries grow as snow melts

Nearly half the state in new emergency declaration

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — Washington's drought, so far confined to less than half the state, may grow into a statewide emergency in another month, Department of Ecology Director Maia Bellon said Friday.

"I think it's possible, very possible," she said in a conference call with reporters hours

after Gov. Jay Inslee expanded a previous drought declaration from about one-fifth to nearly one-half the state.

As snowpack melts, drought worries spread. State agencies are monitoring potential impacts on agriculture, fish and cities. Virtually the entire state can expect summer river and stream flows below 75 percent of normal.

DOE will re-evaluate in ear-

ly May summer water supply outlooks. Long-range climate forecasts say the state will continue to be warmer than average.

"Conditions are expected to get worse," Bellon said.

Inslee declared a drought emergency March 13 in 11 watersheds in the Yakima and Wenatchee areas, Walla Walla region and Olympic Peninsula.

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Klamath ag businesses brace for another dry year

By **CRAIG REED**
For the Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — The possibility of enough rain showers through the upcoming summer is probably nil, so ag-related businesses in the Klamath Basin anticipate another year of drought conditions.

There is basically no snowpack on the east side of the Cascade Range, so there'll be little or no water from melt off in the hot months of July and August. It's anticipated that thousands of acres won't be put into



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press
Michael Ugalde, left, and Billy Conrad, territory managers for Pape Machinery in its Merrill, Ore., store, have the responsibility of selling big equipment such as this John Deere tractor.

production because of a lack of

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THIS WEEK IN THE CAPITAL PRESS



PRODUCTION
Maiden season for new apple line
Company begins operating its new apple packing line just in time to help handle its share of the industry's largest crop on record.
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MARKETING
Lamb sliders a hit at ballpark
The nation's largest processor of lamb is taking its message — and its meat — out to the ballgame.
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Craft brewers boost demand for HOPS

States beyond Northwest return to growing hops as possible shortage looms

By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press



Photos by Dan Wheat/Capital Press
A worker digs a hole for a hops pole at Oasis Farms between Prosser and Benton City, Wash., March 26. The farm is one of many adding hop acreage in the Pacific Northwest and Midwest this year to meet demand from small craft brewers.

YAKIMA, Wash. — The continuing growth of craft beer is squeezing the U.S. hop industry.

It's driving an increase in plantings in the nation's premier hop-growing region — the Pacific Northwest. And it's causing states that haven't produced hops for decades to venture back into it. Even then, there probably won't be enough for craft brewers or to prevent a worldwide shortage of hops for big brewers in a few years.

Craft breweries are projecting 20 percent annual growth through 2020, according to Ann George, administrator of Hop Growers of America and the Washington Hop Commission in Moxee, Wash. That means hop acreage is likely to keep increasing, she said.

To meet that demand, growers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho have been shifting from alpha variety hops that large brewers prefer to the more profitable aroma varieties that craft brewers want.

Oil in the hop cone, or flower, is used for flavor and to stabilize the beer.

Pete Mahony, director of supply chain management and purchasing for John I. Haas Inc. in Yakima, has warned the shift could lead to a shortage of alpha hops.

At current trends, there will be a worldwide alpha shortage by 2018, predicted Lynn Kemme, owner of Great Lakes Hops, a hop propagator in Zeeland, Mich.

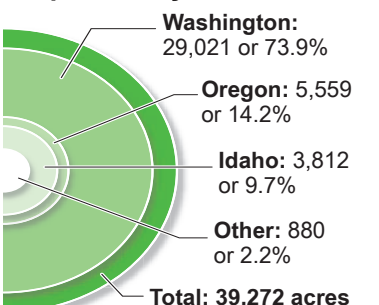
Large brewers, however, say they don't rely solely on the open market.

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U.S. commercial hop production in 2014

Nearly 71 million pounds of hops were harvested in 2014, a crop valued at \$272 million, according to USDA NASS data.

Hop acres by state



A bag of pelletized hops at Roy Farms, Moxee, Wash., during 2013 harvest.



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