

Water utility teams up with farmers to fight hazelnut worms

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press



Courtesy of Oregon State University
A moth that damages hazelnuts can be controlled by pheromone mating disruption techniques, researchers learned.

A three-year research project involving a water utility, growers and university researchers showed pheromone trickery can reduce the use of pesticides 60 to 75 percent in hazelnut orchards.

At orchards along the McKenzie River east of Eugene, Ore., and in the Northern Willamette Valley, researchers placed pheromone-laden rings in the upper-third of the tree canopy. The rings, about 3 feet in diameter with a texture similar to baling twine, release a plume of pheromones in the air space above the orchard. That confuses male filbert moths and makes it difficult for them to find females, which attract mates by releasing similar come-hither compounds.

Filbert worms emerging from the moth's eggs cause severe damage to nuts.

The mating disruption technique reduced the filbert worm

ect. Faculty research assistant Betsy Miller of OSU did much of the field work.

EWEB's interest is in keeping pesticides out of the McKenzie River, which provides drinking water for the city of Eugene, utility spokesman Joe Harwood said.

Hazelnut grower Garry Rodakowski said he appreciates the utility's willingness to work with farmers.

"Having that type of help makes you want do more," he said.

Rodakowski said he's willing to continue using mating disruption against filbert moths but said growers could use help monitoring traps. That work is key to tracking the presence of moths in the orchard, although it doesn't tell growers if the moths are mating.

"Any time you're spraying less you've got dollar savings, time savings, equipment," Rodakowski said.

Walton, of OSU, said grow-

ers who use mating disruption may still want to spray around the border of their orchards, because other trees, such as oaks, can be hosts to the moths. Growers may find it necessary to do a "knock-down" spray every two or three years, he said.

Walton estimated the pheromone method costs about \$55 an acre, compared to \$52 or \$53 per acre with chemical control.

Pheromone mating disruption techniques are widely used to protect crops such as apples, which are attacked by codling moths, but hazelnuts is a small crop by comparison, Walton said. Chemical companies prefer to develop products that can be used on a wide range of crops, and generate more business, he said.

But the Oregon hazelnut industry has grown significantly over the years, and the moth compound has been found to work in pecans as well, which expands the market, Walton said.

U.S. potato acreage up 1.9 percent, NASS reports

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press



John O'Connell/Capital Press

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho — Idaho potato industry officials say they aren't too concerned about recent reports estimating a slight increase in planted acres, both in the state and nationwide.

U.S. potato growers planted 955,300 acres this season, — a 1.9 percent increase from the 936,900 acres they planted in 2014, according to June 30 estimates from USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Idaho's crop, at 325,000 acres, is up 4,000 acres from last season, according to the report.

USDA estimates Washington state growers planted 170,000 acres, up 5,000 acres from last season. Oregon growers held steady at 39,000 acres and California growers planted 7,500 acres, down 1,000 acres from 2014.

The NASS estimates are in line with numbers also released June 30 by United Potato Growers of Idaho, which sent teams driving 14,000 miles to physically count potato fields. According to UPGI, Idaho growers planted 323,956 acres, up from 321,462 acres last season.

Based on the weakness of the fresh potato market during the past two seasons and its sensitivity to higher yields, University of Idaho Extension economist Paul Patterson anticipated reports would show a slight decrease in Idaho's planted acres.

"The market is signaling for people to plant fewer potatoes, which typically should be a reduction, not an increase," Patterson said.

Patterson said other indicators that a decrease was in order include the strength of the dollar hampering exports, recent efforts by Europeans to expand potato markets and the lingering effects of the labor slow-down at West Coast ports.

However, IPGA officials say both their numbers and the NASS estimates show the

Potatoes grow in Idaho Falls. Potato acres are up slightly, both in Idaho and the U.S., from last season, according to a new USDA report, but industry leaders believe hot weather may keep Idaho's yields in check.

Idaho increases are coming from southwestern counties, which produce spuds mostly to fill processing contracts, rather than flooding the open market.

According to IPGA's count, growers in counties associated with fresh production planted 1,717 fewer acres this season, while planting in counties associated with processing was up by 4,402 acres.

Randy Hardy, an Oakley, Idaho, grower who chairs the fresh cooperative Sun Valley Potatoes, explained Ore-Ida moved many of the additional processed acres into Idaho from Oregon to be closer to its plant in Ontario, Ore. Though the other major processing companies reduced their Idaho contracts slightly, based on the port issue, Hardy said they're "currently running hard now. They're swamped."

Hardy believes the acreage report is "as neutral as it could possibly be" and believes Idaho's current spell of temperatures peaking above 100 degrees will ultimately have a greater impact. In 2007, when hot temperatures also arrived at about the same growth stage, Hardy said plants lost tubers, and yields were down. He said early digs in the Rupert area have confirmed reduced tuber counts, though there's still ample time for plants to rebound.

Oregon adds century, sesquicentennial farms and ranches

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press



Courtesy of Oregon Farm Bureau

Eleven farms and ranches that have been in continuous operation by the same family for 100 years have been added to the state's list of Century Farms, the Oregon Farm Bureau announced.

Five more farms reached the 150-year mark and will be honored as Sesquicentennial Farms during the Oregon State Fair in August.

With the additions, Oregon now has 1,175 Century Farms and Ranches and 33 Sesquicentennial Farms and Ranches.

The Century Farms added this year are: Cheyne Farm, Klamath County; the Louis and Anna Falk Farm and Charles Ludwig Falk Farm, both in Linn County; Hynes Farm, Marion County; Taghon Farm, Washington County; Fisher Patterson Farm, Marion County; Christensen Farm, Linn County; McCready Ranch, Klamath County; Padget Ranches, Sherman County; Gentleacres, Polk County; and Bingaman Enterprises, Union County.

The George W. Smith Ranch of Coos County is among Oregon's Sesquicentennial Farms and Ranches, places that have been in continuous family operation for 150 years.

Sesquicentennial Farms added this year are: Mid Valley Farm, Washington County; George W. Smith Ranch, Coos County; James Monroe Hemphill Farm, Umatilla County; Lieualen Century Ranches, Umatilla County; and John F. Adams Farming Enterprise, Umatilla County.

To be eligible, the farm or ranch has to have remained in continuous family operation and attain a gross income from farm use of at least \$1,000 per year in at least three out of five years prior to application. Family members must live on or actively manage the farm or ranch.

Documentation can include photos, original deeds, personal stories or other historic records.

The program is supported by a partnership that includes the Oregon Farm Bureau the State Historic Preservation Office and Oregon State University Archives.

REIT purchases 6,000 acres of Willamette Valley farmland

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

More organic acreage is expected to become available in Oregon's Willamette Valley due to a recent real estate transaction involving a 6,000-acre farming operation.

The owned and leased properties of Olsen Agricultural Enterprises, a family-owned company, were recently taken over by a real estate investment trust operated by the Farmland LP investment firm.

Much of that acreage will be converted to organic production and rented to other growers who hope to expand their operations.

"The biggest thing holding them back has been access to organically certified land,"

said Craig Wichner, managing partner of Farmland LP.

As part of the overhaul, the firm plans to significantly reduce the amount of property devoted to grass seed — traditionally one of Olsen's staple crops — to use it for higher-value crops.

USDA certification rules require that land be managed without synthetic pesticides or fertilizers for three years before the crops it yields can be marketed as organic.

During that transition period, Farmland LP plans to grow clover on former grass seed acreage or use the fields for livestock pasture.

The real estate investment trust, or REIT, operated by Farmland LP is not the only one dedicated to agricultural

properties.

Farmland Partners Inc. owns 53,000 acres, primarily in the Central and Southern U.S., while Gladstone Land Corp. owns about 11,500 acres, mostly in California and Florida.

While these companies are focused on buying land from farmers and then leasing it back to them, Farmland LP is unique in that it invests in organic certification and infrastructure upgrades to allow for more complex and profitable operations, Wichner said.

"We very much focus on adding value," he said.

Aside from the former Olsen properties, Farmland LP has 1,500 acres near Corvallis, Ore., and 5,700 acres near San Francisco.

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