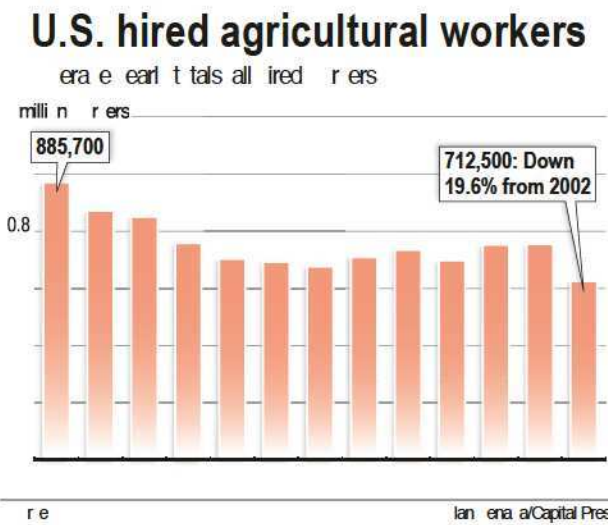




Photo courtesy of UCANR

Farmworkers pick jalapeno peppers this summer in Gilroy, Calif. As a farmworker shortage intensifies, some growers of labor-intensive fruits and vegetables are considering switching at least some of their fields to crops that can be harvested mechanically.

# Farmworker shortage prompts some growers to switch crops



By TIM HEARDEN | CAPITAL PRESS

CORNING, Calif. — Bob Steinacher has grown organic figs in the northern Sacramento Valley for 34 years.

Like many West Coast growers, he has had difficulty finding enough labor for his annual harvest, but he’s always managed to find enough workers who could tell the ripeness of his fig crop to get it picked, sorted and packed. While Steinacher has long given up on the thought of expanding his orchards, he never considered switching his orchards to other crops because of the shortage of workers.

Until now.

This summer about 20 percent of his fig crop — worth at least \$500,000 — fell to the ground unpicked because Steinacher couldn’t find enough workers to get all the fruit picked, sorted and packed into boxes.

Turn to LABOR, Page 12



Photo courtesy of UCANR  
A device for mechanically removing weeds is demonstrated for growers at a field day at University of California-Davis in July.



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Raquel Ibarra packs figs into boxes at Maywood Farms in Corning, Calif. The operation has raised its wages several times recently to attract workers amid a labor shortage.



Photo courtesy of UCANR

A canopy-contact harvester is tested in a table olive orchard at Rocky Hill Ranch in Tulare County, Calif.

## Whitman County farmer can pay \$100 to settle wolf shooting

Prosecutor says conviction was in doubt

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

A Whitman County, Wash., farmer won’t face criminal prosecution for shooting a gray wolf in 2014 if he pays \$100 and commits no further game violations for the next six months, the county’s prosecutor, Denis Tracy, announced Monday.

Jonathan Rasmussen, 38, has been charged with taking a state endangered species, a



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

A Whitman County, Wash., farmer won’t face criminal prosecution for shooting a gray wolf in 2014 if he pays \$100 and commits no further game violations for the next six months.

gross misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Rasmussen is accused of shooting the wolf

Oct. 12 in a Palouse farm field southwest of Pullman.

Turn to WOLF, Page 12

## Oregon faces uncertain drought recovery

‘El Nino’ pattern bodes ill for snowpack

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

Water levels in reservoirs across Oregon are two-thirds below average as summer ends, but autumn and winter weather may not offer much help, experts say.

Mountain snowpacks that provide irrigation water and replenish reservoirs are facing another tough year as the “El Nino” atmospheric pattern bodes for warmer winter weather.

“There’s a lot of concern those reservoirs won’t fill,”

said April Snell, executive director of the Oregon Water Resources Congress, which represents irrigation districts.

At this point, the deviation toward higher temperatures over winter is projected to be among the three most significant variations since the 1950s, said Tom Di Liberto, meteorologist for the Climate Prediction Center at the National Weather Service.

“We do expect it to be one of the strongest ones,” he said.

Turn to DROUGHT, Page 12



7 29467 70125 0



598 N. Wilbur Ave., Walla Walla  
www.cascadefarmandoutdoor.com

### Bountiful Savings

Fill your basket with the great deals in this week's ad in the paper!

Available in store and online. Prices good through September 30.

