

U.S. producers will benefit from TPP, economists predict

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

While one economist predicts U.S. fruit and vegetable farmers will be the big winners in the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, another believes the beef industry could ultimately see the biggest gains.

The produce industry will gain a lot of customers from the TPP “simply because it reduces their costs in the markets,” said Peter Tozer, director of Washington State University’s IMPACT Center, which measures the effect of global factors on Washington agriculture.

Tozer doesn’t see any major losers in the deal, just sectors of agriculture where the benefits won’t be as large as predicted.

U.S. beef and dairy producers hoped to improve access into the Japanese market under the deal.

“But then you’ve got to also remember Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States all want a piece of that market,” he said. “In the long term, it might end up being a bit of a wash with regard to who benefits the most.”

Japan’s involvement in TPP was a major factor for participating countries, since it has some of the most complicated trade barriers.

Tozer said the deal probably could have gone further, since Japan’s beef and dairy industry are still well-protected, but political sensitivities in Japan are a factor.

“I think you’ve got to look at it as sort of the glass half full rather than the glass half empty,” he said. “The tariffs are coming down, so it provides low-cost (entry) into that market. There will be benefits for ag producers in the United States, especially with beef.”

Andrew Cassey, associate professor in WSU’s School of Economic Sciences, believes beef exporters currently blocked from some TPP countries will benefit most.

TPP’s economic success depends on the extent it allows firms to access markets they were previously unable to reach. If it happens on a large scale, the benefit goes to consumers or firms that now have more goods and types of goods available to them at lower prices, and exporting firms now able to sell to more people and more foreign firm purchasers.

“There should be large gain to middle-sized firms that were maybe just exporting to Canada and Mexico if TPP allows them to enter new markets,” Cassey said.

Firms that make products similar to a foreign product and are not very productive now should be concerned, Cassey said. Increased foreign entry will further reduce their profitability, regardless of whether they currently export.

Vietnam is the country that may benefit the most, gaining export into Pacific Rim countries they did not have access to before, Tozer said.

Karen Lewis heads WSU Extension tree fruit team

By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press

MOSES LAKE, Wash. — Karen Lewis, a Washington State University Extension regional tree fruit specialist, has been appointed to lead WSU’s tree fruit extension team.

Lewis is assuming some of the duties of the former tree fruit extension program leader, Desmond Layne, who was appointed director of agricultural and food systems and integrated plant sciences programs at WSU on Sept. 1.

Lewis will continue as specialist focusing on integration of orchard systems, people and technology. About 30 percent of her time will be spent in her new role coordinating the delivery of information from researchers to the industry.

Tianna DuPont starts Nov. 1 as a new WSU regional tree fruit specialist in Wenatchee, succeeding Tim Smith. She will work with the industry and her WSU colleagues to identify issues and areas to focus her research, Lewis said.

DuPont has been a sustainable agriculture and vegetable and small fruit educator at Penn State University.

Gwen Hoheisel, WSU tree fruit, grape and berry specialist in Prosser, focuses on spray application technology.

Many other WSU and Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission research scientists are part of the extension team, Lewis said.

Her job, she said, will be to coordinate and facilitate their collaborative delivery of information from their work to the industry.

Corn maze provides spook-tacular fun

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
EO Media Group

Celebrating its 16th year, the Walla Walla Corn Maze has a Sweet 16 theme carved within the rows of corn.

However, the sweet experience can be scary. As if the swooshing sound of the corn stalks in the wind isn’t enough to keep you on edge, masked creatures are lurking within the maze to scare those brave enough to enter in the darkness.

The maze offers spooky fun Thursdays and Sundays from dark until 10 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from dark to 11 p.m. Parental discretion is required for children under 12. People are encouraged to bring a flashlight.

For the faint of heart, regular hours are Saturdays and Sundays from 2 to 5 p.m. Families with small children can enter the maze for a non-scary experience.

The daytime tours are free for ages 0-3, \$5 for ages 4-11 (must be accompanied by someone 16 or older) and \$7 for ages 12 and up. The nighttime entry for scary fun is \$10 per person. Payment is by cash or checks only. The last admission is 30 minutes prior to closing time.



Tammy Malgesini/EO Media Group

A family can’t decide which way to go while visiting the Walla Walla Corn Maze. The maze, which is open through Halloween, offers regular hours and scary hours.

In addition to the maze, visitors can try their luck with the corn cannons during daylight hours Saturday and Sundays. Launch corncobs for a chance to win cash prizes or extra shots. The cost is \$1 per shot or \$10 for 12 shots.

Also, sit around the bonfire

and enjoy some food from the concession stand. Keri’s Concessions offers burgers, hot dogs, corn dogs, fries, tater tots and nachos.

The Walla Walla Corn Maze is located at 853 Five Mile Road, Walla Walla. To get there, follow the signs

east on Isaacs to Mill Creek Road, and go right at the Y onto Five Mile Road. Travel approximately 1/2 mile to the parking lot of the corn maze on the left.

For more information, visit www.wallawallacornmaze.com or call 509-525-4798.

Researchers anticipate more yellow dwarf trouble

By **JOHN O’CONNELL**
Capital Press

University of Idaho Extension researchers warn that aphid pressure is mounting amid a warm fall, and conditions may be aligning once again for widespread barley yellow dwarf virus infections in winter grains.

UI Extension cereals pathologist Juliet Marshall advises growers to monitor their fields for aphids and to spray a foliar insecticide on emerging fall grains as their initial seed treatments begin to wear off.

“We’re pretty confident there will be another widespread infection,” Marshall said.

Symptoms of the aphid-spread virus include yellowing leaves, often with red tips. It weakens plants, making them more susceptible to other crop ailments, and can contribute to yield reductions in excess of 60 percent.

According to the National Weather Service, temperatures haven’t dipped below freezing yet this fall in Burley and Blackfoot, and the forecast calls for above-normal temperatures throughout Southern Idaho for the next two weeks. The current records for latest date in fall before a freezing temperature are Oct. 17 in Blackfoot and Oct. 28 in Burley. Pocatello dipped below 32 degrees briefly on Oct. 12, but freezing



Courtesy of Russell Patterson

Winter barley planted by Russell Patterson in Idaho’s Golden Valley yellows and shows symptoms of barley yellow dwarf virus. Patterson had to destroy and replant 900 acres of infected barley.

temperatures must persist for a few hours to become a killing frost.

“We normally have a killing frost a lot earlier than now,” Marshall said. “I’m concerned how long this warm fall will continue. Insecticidal seed treatments may not last long enough.”

Marshall said Southern Idaho winter wheat yields were generally down by 10 to 15 percent this season — a surprisingly small impact given the extent of infections — and a wet May in South-

ern Idaho likely helped crops recover.

Twin Falls County grower Roger Wells said barley yellow dwarf caused little damage in some fall wheat fields he harvested this season, but losses approached 50 percent in other fields, despite his use of seed treatments.

Wells has delayed planting winter wheat this fall to minimize aphid contact. He used seed treatments and plans to spray a foliar insecticide if his area doesn’t receive a killing frost within the next few days.

Based on his seed deliveries, Mike Erickson, a seed treatment specialist with McGregor Co. in Twin Falls, believes many growers, like Wells, have delayed planting fall grain by two weeks to a month. He’s also encouraged that more growers seem to be getting the message about yellow dwarf and using seed treatments.

He said aphids have been out in force since late September. He’d like UI to resume aphid trapping to help growers make better management decisions.

Marshall said UI has yellow dwarf chemical trials underway in a commercial field near Buhl and is screening winter wheat varieties, including some promising Kansas State University types, for resistance.

With Idaho Wheat Commission funding, UI Extension entomologist Arash Rashed said UI has also begun monitoring aphid populations and testing for the virus in corn, which is a potential host. Rashed said most corn has tested negative thus far, though he’s found an abundance of aphids. The virus has been confirmed in some grassy weeds, and Rashed said widespread volunteers this fall could serve as hosts.

“It’s about time for cutting corn,” Rashed said. “Aphids will be moving into volunteers and winter crops.”

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