



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Fred Lindsay of Warden, Wash., chats with Steve Cottom of Dillon, Mont., at last year's Washington-Oregon Potato Conference in Kennewick, Wash.

Potato conference will boast record number of exhibitors

Heat, nematodes are topics of concern at upcoming meeting

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

The Washington-Oregon Potato Conference will be Jan. 26-28 at the Three Rivers Convention Center and Toyota Center in Kennewick, Wash.

The conference boasts 172 exhibitors, up from 133 last year, the biggest number since the Washington and Oregon industries combined for the conference in 2010, said Ryan Holterhoff, director of marketing and industry affairs with the Washington State Potato Commission.

"It really shows that people want to be a part of this, come out and get together as an industry, see what's going on and make those connections," Holterhoff said.

This year, most of the big equipment will be outside to allow more room, said Dale Lathim, chairman of the conference trade show.

"The equipment for potato farming today is getting bigger and bigger, and it just takes up so much room," Lathim said. "We removed the equipment, went with bigger spaces for some of the more prominent companies and we were able to squeeze in at least 40 new companies to be on display. We think that's going to add some additional faces and products and different ideas to the trade show."

The conference already had a large waiting list of exhibitors, but when they heard about the increased space, it generated more interest, Lathim said, so the new waiting list is back up to more than 50 companies.

"There's a lot of demand for the show, but unfortunately in Eastern Washington or Oregon, there's just not a lot of available conference space, so we're limited," he said. "We're doing everything we can to allow as many companies as possible to have exposure to growers and for the growers to see what they have to offer."

Keynote speaker David Sax, author of the book "The Tastemakers," will speak about changing food trends.

"With potatoes definitely being a consumer-driven product, it will be helpful to get his perspective as a food writer and someone who studies these trends, to see what's out there next and how potatoes

Judge approves Evergreen sale to Jackson Family Wines

MCMINNVILLE, Ore. (AP) — A federal bankruptcy judge has approved the sale of two buildings on the former Evergreen International Aviation campus in McMinnville to Jackson Family Wines.

The California wine giant has been adding property in the Willamette Valley, and the company noted in a statement that the Evergreen site is convenient to its vineyards. The firm added that its long-term plan includes the development of a wine production facility.

Jackson Family Wines submitted the high bid of \$4.6 million in October. The Yamhill Valley News-Register reports that approval was delayed because of a dispute about road and utility easements.

Calf's death impacts wolf plan discussions

By **TIM HEARDEN**
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — For ranchers, California's first suspected wolf depredation on a calf in Siskiyou County in late fall casts a long shadow over the state's efforts to develop a wolf management plan.

Ranchers say they were gathering cattle on the morning of Nov. 10 when they came upon five wolves feeding on a dead calf in a meadow and drove the wolves off, according to a state report issued Dec. 18.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife classified the incident as a "probable" depredation, although "the absence of the majority of the carcass ... precludes determination of a cause of death," investigators stated in the report.

The incident comes as Fish and Wildlife is taking comments through Feb. 15 on a draft plan for managing gray wolves, which were granted state endangered-species pro-



Courtesy Calif. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

A gray wolf roams in southeastern Siskiyou County in Northern California. State officials have photographed five gray wolf pups and two adults in the area and dubbed them the Shasta Pack. They are now writing a plan for managing wolves.

tections in 2014 over vocal objections from the California Cattlemen's Association and other farm groups.

Kirk Wilbur, the CCA's director of government relations and a member of a working group of affected parties that put the proposal together, said the suspected depredation shows that wolves are arriving much faster than people expected.

"When we set out to come up with a wolf management

plan in collaboration with the stakeholder working group, everyone ... including the Department of Fish and Wildlife felt we'd be a little ways off before wolves became established in California," Wilbur said.

"Here it's been less than a year (since wolves were established) and we've already got a pack of wolves established in California, and subsequent to that, depredations have begun much sooner than every-

one thought they would," he said.

The CCA would like to see more radio collaring of wolves so ranchers could be warned that a pack is nearby and so authorities can know if a pack was in the area when they receive depredation reports, Wilbur said.

Announced Dec. 2, the draft wolf plan includes sections on wolves' interactions with livestock, horses and other wildlife. A protocol for livestock producers suggests they take certain measures to prevent depredation, such as removing diseased carcasses that could attract wolves, fencing off livestock, installing motion-sensor lights and using range riders to guard herds.

Fish and Wildlife spokesman Jordan Traverso said the rapid arrival of wolves actually delayed completion of the draft plan, because much of it had been written to say "when wolves re-establish" and now the animals are already here.

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