

Child care system to be studied for farmworkers

By **DAN WHEAT**
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — Growers of labor-intensive crops and farmworkers could greatly benefit by some sort of system providing child care for children of workers, organizations that have been studying the issue say.

It could keep growers out of legal trouble, meet workers' need for child care and the cost wouldn't have to be borne solely by employers, they say.

The Washington Growers League, which represents growers on labor and worker safety and health issues, last year teamed up with the National Farm Medicine Center in Marshfield, Wis., and the Migrant Clinicians Network in Austin, Texas, to survey growers on barriers and motivators on providing child care.

Mike Gempler, executive director of the league, could not be reached for comment, but Barbara Lee, senior research scientist at the National Farm Medicine Center and director of its National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety, said Gempler got the center interested in the issue.

"He said a lot of women want to work but can't because they can't find child care," Lee said.

The cost and limited hours child care is available are barriers to employers providing it but a Florida program works well without growers or workers paying daily fees, Lee said.

Redlands Christian Migrant Association in Homestead, Fla., has been providing child care to workers for 50 years and has grown to serve 6,733 children in 21 counties. It is done with federal Head Start money, state dollars and donations from growers and other private parties.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

A young girl, likely underage, picks apples in an orchard in 2014. She was helping her father pick. Children sometimes end up in orchards for lack of child care which can get growers in trouble with child labor laws.

"Three years ago, there was a half-million-dollar gift from a major avocado grower who loves the program," Lee said. "No other state has a program this big or well-organized."

Donations, fundraising and non-governmental grants exceeded \$1.7 million in 2015, according to RCMA's annual report.

The Washington Growers League interviewed management and held focus groups with workers at a Central Washington cherry orchard and a Western Washington berry farm. Forty-two employers responded to an online survey.

Of the employers, 73 percent said they thought child care would result in having workers available to work more hours, 68 percent said it would result in more workers, 57 percent said it would mean a more stable workforce, 57 percent said it would mean less concern about child safety and 30 percent said it would decrease jeopardy of child labor occurring.

Sixty-three percent of the employers said children are never brought to worksites,

21 percent said it rarely happens, 9 percent said it happens sometimes and 7 percent said it occurs frequently.

Federal law prohibits children under 12 from working, with narrow exceptions.

A Mesa, Wash., grower paid a \$16,000 fine last August to free his apples for sale after the U.S. Department of Labor placed a hold on the fruit, saying it found two children working in his orchard. The grower said the children, apparently brought by a worker for lack of child care, were not working but that he had to admit they were to get his apples freed.

Lee said another 71 employers were surveyed at a labor conference in Las Vegas and more at a meeting in Monterey, Calif. Of the 71, most produce tree fruit, nuts, berries and grapes. Fifty-six percent said children never come to worksites, 40 percent said companies should pay more attention to child care and 53 percent said business associates and customers would be pleased if employers supported child care for workers.

Oregon ag department schedules meetings on gypsy moth spraying

By **ERIC MORTENSON**
Capital Press

The Oregon Department of Agriculture proposes to spray 8,674 acres in North Portland this spring to head off a potential infestation of destructive gypsy moths.

Aerial sprayings tend to cause public scrutiny and worry, however, even when it involves a biological insecticide that's been successfully used against gypsy moths for more than 30 years. For that reason, the department is hosting a pair of meetings to explain the project.

The first is Wednesday, Feb. 17, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at James John Elementary School, 7439 N. Charleston Ave., Portland. The second is Saturday, Feb. 20, from 9 a.m. to noon at the same place.

Gypsy moths are voracious eaters and multiply rapidly. Unchecked, they could kill trees and or heavily damage Pacific Northwest forests and crops such as Christmas trees.

Agencies monitor their presence with traps and spray from time to time to control them.

Two Asian gypsy moths were found in North Portland traps this past summer and another was found across the Columbia River in Washington. Asian gypsy moths are more mobile than the European variety sometimes trapped in the Northwest.

The area proposed for spraying includes Hayden Island, St. Johns, and Forest Park in Portland. ODA proposes three aerial applications in late April and early May, using *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*, commonly known as Btk.

An environmental assessment of the project will be available Feb. 12 from the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. It can be seen at www.aphis.usda.gov/planthealth/ea/. A comment period ends March 14. Comments should be directed to Christopher.Deegan@aphis.usda.gov or gyps moth@oda.state.or.us.

Asian gypsy moth



Adult male
Courtesy of en.wikipedia.org

Binomial name: *Lymantria dispar asiatica*

Appearance: Adult males have grayish-brown wings with darker bands and a wingspan of 1 1/2 inches. Adult females are white and much larger with a wingspan of 3 1/2 inches.

Diet: More than 600 species of trees and shrubs, including larch, oak, poplar, alder, willow and some evergreens.

Life cycle: Four stages; egg, larva, pupa and moth. Eggs are laid between June-September and remain dormant through winter to hatch the following spring.

Origin: Far East countries such as China, Russia and Japan.

First observed in N. America: 1991 near Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Source: USDA APHIS

Capital Press graphic

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Lawmaker warns about topping carbon cap with tax

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — A carbon cap as ordered by Gov. Jay Inslee and a carbon tax as proposed by an initiative would be a chilling combination for Washington's business climate, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee said Tuesday.

Sen. Doug Ericksen, R-Ferndale, presided over a two-hour public hearing on Initiative 732, whose supporters collected enough signatures to push the tax proposal to the top of carbon-reduction ideas swirling in Washington. Lawmakers must either adopt the initiative or put it to a statewide vote in November.

By then, the state Department of Ecology may have finalized a carbon cap ordered up by Inslee. DOE has proposed capping and rolling back greenhouse gas emissions from 70 oil refineries, fuel importers and manufacturers, including a fertilizer maker in Kennewick and two food processors in Othello.

The Legislature last year rejected a plan by Inslee to combine a cap and tax in one regulatory scheme.

"I've spoken with many companies both large and small who have indicated that if you have a carbon cap rule out of the Governor's Office and Initiative 732 passing in November, you could have major negative impacts in their ability to make capital investments," Ericksen said.

I-732 has little visible support from Republicans, Democrats, business groups or environmental organizations.

Carbon Washington's founder, University of Washington economist Yoram Bauman, said the group, which collected the signatures, will put together a campaign if lawmakers don't approve I-732.

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