

Capital Press

The West's **Aq** Weekly

FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

★★

VOLUME 89, NUMBER 11

WWW.CAPITALPRESS.COM

\$2.00

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CERTIFIABLE AGRICULTURE



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Randy MacMillan, vice president of research and environmental affairs for Clear Springs Foods, looks out over trout raceways at the company's Snake River Farms in Buhl, Idaho, and talks about the company's sustainable production system on March 3.

Farmers and processors face more scrutiny as customers demand to know how food is produced

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

Randy MacMillan and the employees at Clear Springs Food are preparing for the latest in a growing list of audits.

The Buhl, Idaho, trout farm is subjected to six annual third-party audits of its environmental impact, food safety practices and how socially responsible it is. The audits, MacMillan said, require mountains of paperwork, and the company must pay fees based on its annual production.

The audits are on top of some 1,300 regulations generated by 30 government agencies that domestic aquaculture operations must meet, said MacMillan, the company's vice president.

But the certifications assure retailers — and their customers — that Clear Springs Food products meet their expectations.

"Most customers don't understand the regulatory system in the U.S.," MacMillan said. "They

don't understand the federal Clean Water Act. They don't understand state standards for clean water, so we're at a real disadvantage."

In recent years, a rising tide of audits and certifications has swamped many producers, from those who raise trout to those who raise cattle and other crops. The audits and certifications assure consumers that no salmon were hurt in growing an apple, or that a cherry meets Europe's rigorous farming standards. They signify that food has no genetically modified ingredients or that chickens were well-treated. They even certify that no slaves were used.

Worldwide, 463 labels in 199 nations certify that products — many relating to food — meet ecological standards. The best-known certifications cover whether food is raised organically, but others cover a wide range of issues, qualities and concerns.

Turn to **CERTIFIABLE**, Page 12

LABEL SYSTEM: Some of the best-known certifications (at right, left) cover a wide range of issues, qualities and concerns by consumers relating to whether food meets ecological standards.



Washington Supreme Court rules against farm manager

Advocates say ruling will change industry practices

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — The Washington Supreme Court has issued a ruling in a \$1 million case that could have broad implications for any owners who hire outside managers to operate their orchards, industry representatives say.

In its decision, which was announced March 3, the high court ruled that any on-site farm management company that hires workers must have a state farm labor contractor license.

The 9-0 decision affirms a federal judge's ruling and, according to the state Department of Labor and Industries, reinforces the department's longtime position that anyone paid a fee to hire workers needs a farm labor contractor license.

An attorney who represented the orchard manager, Northwest Management Realty Services, however, said the ruling fundamentally changes industry practice, extending the state's Farm Labor Contractors Act to far more agricultural operations.

"It's hard to overstate the impact this will have on Washington agriculture," said Yakima lawyer Brendan Monahan.

The case, Saucedo v. John Hancock Insurance, stems from a federal class-action lawsuit filed by Columbia Legal Services on behalf of workers at the three Yakima County orchards.

John Hancock and pension fund manager Texas Municipal Plans Consortium owned the orchards. California-based Farmland Management Services served as a middleman and hired a local business, Northwest Management Realty Services, to run the orchards.

Turn to **HANDCOCK**, Page 12



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

An American flag waves over the Temple of Justice on March 3 in Olympia. The Washington Supreme Court ruled an on-site farm manager in Yakima County should have had a labor contractor license, upholding the basis for a \$1 million judgment against three orchards.

Public meeting on new Klamath agreements set in Sacramento

Agencies, groups proposing removal of four dams on river

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — After complaints from U.S. Rep. Doug LaMalfa and others that their latest agreement was being crafted in secret, agencies planning the removal of four dams from the Klamath River announced a public meeting for March 16 to

discuss the plan.

The Klamath Basin Coordinating Council will consider formally amending a set of 2010 agreements on the future of the Klamath Basin and take public comments during a 1 p.m. meeting at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Sacramento.

The meeting comes after PacifiCorp, the states of California and Oregon and

two federal agencies announced plans in February to set up a private entity to handle the four dams' removal by seeking a go-ahead from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The new pact drew vocal complaints from LaMalfa, R-Calif., after two of his staff members showed up at private meetings scheduled to discuss the proposal and were asked to sign confidentiality agreements, which they refused to do.

LaMalfa criticized the Klamath proponents for scheduling their meeting in Sacramento rather than the Klamath Basin or Yreka, Calif., which is near where three of the four dams operate.

"Thanks a lot for having it six hours away from the people who are affected by it," LaMalfa said. "It makes me furious that they haven't had any public meetings at all and now their best effort

Turn to **KLAMATH**, Page 12



Weed & Grass Killer — 1.1 Gallon
Now \$14.99
Everyday Price \$18.99 • Sale price good thru March 16



Roundup

3111 Ocean Blvd. SE, Coos Bay • (541) 252-4031 • Mon-Sat 8-7, Sun 10-6 • www.cascadefarmandoutdoor.com