

Capital Press

The West's **Ag** Weekly

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016



VOLUME 89, NUMBER 52

WWW.CAPITALPRESS.COM

\$2.00

From poinsettias to holly, unique plants provide a niche market for NW farms and nurseries

The other Christmas crops

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Ten years ago, the market for the Northwest's signature Christmas tree crop was depressed by an oversupply, sending prices into the gutter.

The Hupp family, which farms near Silverton, Ore., had an abundance of fully-grown trees that nobody had bought, so they decided to get rid of them.

But not all of them.

After removing roughly every other tree in some of their fields, the Hupps allowed the remaining Noble firs to develop longer, wider and thicker branches, which were then cut and sold for boughs used in Christmas decorations.

"A lot of it is spacing," said Jason Hupp, whose family owns Hupp Farms.

These days, wreaths, garlands and boughs are a steady business line for the Hupps, who also continue to grow Christmas trees and nursery seedlings.

A major advantage of the bough market is that large buyers send their own crews to harvest the crop.

"We don't have the manpower to cut everything people want," Hupp said. "The nice thing is we don't have to harvest it."

Boughs also play a useful role given the varying conditions across the Hupps' property.

Their best fields with access to irrigation water are devoted to nursery conifers. Marginal land without water is planted to Christmas trees. Steep and less accessible parcels are dedicated to boughs. Rocky fields are committed to timber.

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Kyle Peterson, production manager at Fessler Nursery near Woodburn, Ore., shows off a large poinsettia. The company produces a variety of nursery stock grown in greenhouses.



Christmas trees grow at Hupp Farms near Silverton, Ore. The Hupp family grows nursery conifer seedlings, Christmas trees, boughs and timber.



Photos by Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press
Don Harteloo, owner of Mill Creek Holly Farms near Stayton, Ore., examines holly growing on his property.

"We don't have the manpower to cut everything people want. The nice thing is we don't have to harvest it."

Jason Hupp, Hupp Farms



Jason Hupp, whose family owns Hupp Farms near Silverton, Ore., examines a Noble fir grown for boughs. The Hupp family also grows nursery conifer seedlings, Christmas trees and timber.

EPA delays release of What's Upstream records



Courtesy of Save Family Farming

An advertising sign on a Whatcom County, Wash., transit bus promotes an Environmental Protection Agency-funded campaign to get the state Legislature to mandate 100-foot buffers between all farm fields and waterways.

Due date pushed back to June

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The Environmental Protection Agency has pushed back by six months its self-imposed deadline for releasing records related to the What's Upstream advocacy campaign, frustrating a farm group that requested the

documents more than seven months ago.

Save Family Farming director Gerald Baron said the group will consider taking legal action and asking federal lawmakers to prod the EPA to move faster.

"This is outrageous and inexcusable," he said. "We're not going to take this lying down."

Save Family Farming filed a Freedom of Information Act request April 27, ask-

ing for records related to the EPA-funded lobbying campaign for new restrictions on farming near waterways in Washington. The EPA estimated in June that it would fulfill the request by Dec. 15.

Instead, the EPA that day notified Save Family Farming that while it may provide some records Jan. 31, the agency doesn't anticipate providing all the documents until June 30.

The EPA in a letter offered

several reasons for the delay. The agency cited the "voluminous amount of records" it must search for and examine.

Baron questioned whether the delay can be attributed to the volume of records. "The documents are in the hundreds, not the thousands and tens of thousands," he said.

An EPA spokesman said the agency was committed to complying with the

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In Europe, GMOs rejected by consumers, embraced by farmers

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

European consumers don't approve of genetically engineered crops, but European farmers are eager to feed them to their livestock, according to a USDA report.

As a result, Europe poses an economic opportunity for U.S. farmers while the

threat of a consumer-driven trade disruption looms over exports of biotech crops, experts say.

"As the global cultivation of GE crops expands, it is increasingly difficult for European importers to source non-biotech soybean products. Their availability is declining and prices are on the rise," according

to the new report from USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

Soybeans are a common livestock feed in the European Union, which is trying to boost its production of conventional and organic varieties of the crop, the report said.

Turn to GMO, Page 12



Courtesy U.S. Department of Agriculture

A new USDA report says that while European consumers reject genetically modified food products, European farmers are eager to feed GMO corn and soybeans to their livestock because it's cheaper and more readily available than non-GMO feed.

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