

Mexico takes more of plentiful Red Delicious crop

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — While Washington tree fruit companies are awash in Red Delicious apples, exports to Mexico are up 33 percent from a year ago with most of them being the iconic Red Delicious.

"I'd say it's pretty good into Mexico even with rumblings by the administration and discussion of NAFTA. Mexico has taken a lot of fruit," said Todd Fryhover, president of the Washington Apple Commission in Wenatchee, the industry's export promotion arm.

On Jan. 26, President Donald Trump's press secretary, Sean Spicer, mentioned a 20 percent tariff on Mexico as a possible means of having



Dan Wheat/Capital Press File

Red Delicious apples ready for packing at Olympic Fruit in Moxee, Wash. Mexican buyers are taking more Red Delicious this year than last.

Mexico pay for a border wall. Washington apple exporters don't want that to trigger retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods.

The administration plans to renegotiate the 1994 North

American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada to make it fairer to the U.S. While questionable in some other sectors, NAFTA eliminated Mexican tariffs on

U.S. apples over time, resulting in it becoming the No. 1 export market for Washington apples.

Washington will be midway in sales of its 2016 apple crop in March. But with its second largest crop in history, 135.7 million, 40-pound boxes, it is 10 percent behind in sales targets of Gala and 4 percent behind in Reds, Tom Riggan, president of Chelan Fresh Marketing has said.

Reds and Gala are both selling below breakeven for growers and make up 55 percent of the 76 million boxes of apples left to sell, Riggan said.

Reds are estimated at 39 million boxes for the year with 26 million remaining to be sold. Prices are likely to fall below the current \$13 to \$16.90 per box.

While lower prices help exports, the strength of the dollar in relation to the value of other currencies and the large size of Reds hinder exports, Fryhover said.

"The size of the crop is all a reflection of size of fruit," Fryhover said, noting that one size larger equates to 10 percent more fruit.

Reds are running large, which means fewer per box and more boxes or volume.

Despite all of that, Washington season-to-date exports to Mexico, as of Jan. 31, totaled 3.4 million boxes of apples, mostly Reds and a lot of Gala, he said. That compares with 2.4 million a year ago when the total Washington crop was about 20 million boxes smaller.

"We're probably on track for about 12 million boxes for

the season. That's not bad. It could be better if we had more smaller fruit," Fryhover said.

Mexico took 9.7 million last season and a record 16 million out of the record 143.6-million-box Washington crop in 2014. China is up almost 32 percent over last year, so far, at 1.1 million boxes versus 840,000, Fryhover said.

India is up about 200 percent at 1.3 million boxes versus 440,000 last year, he said. India was abnormally low a year ago with port closures. India takes about 97 percent Reds and China is heavy in Reds, Gala and Granny, he said.

Season-to-date exports totaled 17 million boxes Feb. 5 compared to 14.6 million a year ago and 21 million in 2014.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Culture Breads owner Shaun Thompson Duffy talks about his flour milling and bread-baking processes Feb. 17 in south Spokane. **BELOW:** Thompson Duffy bakes bread made from ancient and heritage grains.

Breadmaker relies on ancient grains

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SPOKANE — When baker Shaun Thompson Duffy and his family moved to Spokane five years ago, he found the close proximity to the Palouse — one of the nation's most productive wheat-growing areas — appealing.

"It just sort of makes sense for a bread baker to be here," Thompson Duffy said. "There's so much potential here, with food, with grains, with life in general."

Thompson Duffy owns Culture Breads. He sells his breads at the Rocket Market and Doma Coffee, and through subscription.

He maxed out at 50 customers, and had to get a bigger oven to take on more people. He still has a waiting list of 150 people.

He said he intends to open a storefront in the Perry District in south Spokane at the end of August.

Originally from Texas, Thompson Duffy attended culinary school and was a chef in Las Vegas, New York City and hotels in Texas and Chicago, where he began, in his words, "exploring" bread.

"You can be at the top of the bread game but you can still have a life," he said. "And you can really do it on your own terms."

Thompson Duffy, 36, uses ancient, heritage or landrace grains, including spelt,



einkorn, rye, Khorasan wheat, Turkey Red wheat, sonora wheat, Egyptian barley and Red Russian wheat, of which he says, "It's my favorite grain in the world."

He buys the grains from area farmers.

Carole Landt, a Rear-dan, Wash., farmer, provided Thompson Duffy with Khorasan wheat, or kamut, an ancient wheat whose grains are double the size of other wheat.

"I think he's a caring individual that wants to make great, healthy bread for people," she said. "I believe in that process, and I'd sure like to move that movement along."

Don Scheuerman is co-founder of Palouse Heritage, which raises heirloom landrace grains in Endicott, Wash. He hopes Thompson Duffy is successful as "a voice in educating about bread" and provides "landrace breads to the Spokane market that are good for the soul, the soil, the environment and the health of his friends and customers."

Thompson Duffy currently

mills his grains in Post Falls, Idaho, once a week and bakes using a custom wood-burning oven in south Spokane. He will switch to twice a week as the weather gets warmer and move a mill into the bakery.

He gives talks about bread and setting up bakeries or pizza shops in the region, and offers bread-baking classes at Spokane public libraries.

He hopes to encourage businesses to use whole grains for flavor, nutrition and digestibility.

Thompson Duffy eventually wants 7 to 9 tons of each grain each year, although he's interested in smaller amounts, too.

He is looking for farmers who use natural practices and no chemicals.

He's also able to contract-mill grains for farmers looking to sell flour.

Legality of Cascade-Siskiyou expansion challenged in court

Complaint alleges expansion overreaches presidential authority

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

The federal government unlawfully expanded the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument onto public land that's dedicated to timber production, according to a lawsuit brought by 17 Oregon counties.

The Association of O&C Counties claims the national monument designation will effectively prohibit logging on 35,000 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management forests that must be harvested on a "sustained yield basis" under a 1937 law.

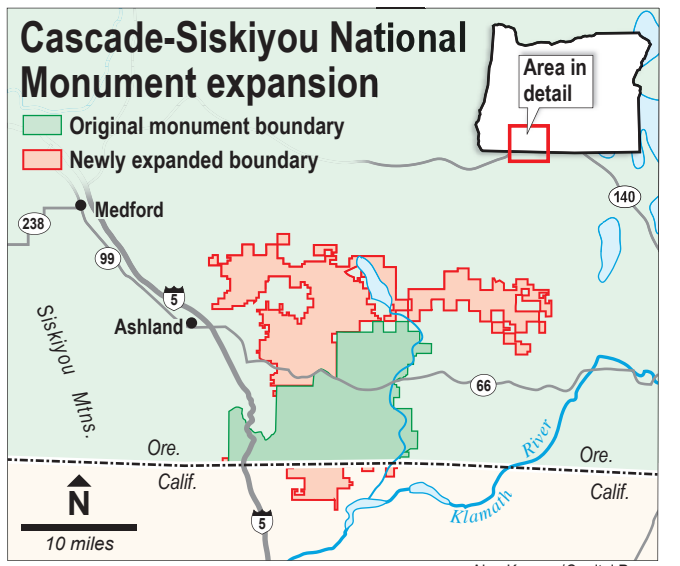
Capital Press was unable to reach a representative of the U.S. Interior Department, which oversees the BLM.

The 53,000-acre national monument was initially created in 2000 under the Clinton administration and was recently increased by 48,000 acres in the waning days of the Obama administration, to the consternation of timber and grazing interests.

Much of the newly added acreage is comprised of lands the federal government originally granted to the Oregon & California Railroad in the late 1800s but later repossessed due to a contract breach.

Because that property was taken off county tax rolls, the O&C Act of 1937 committed it to forest production, with 50-75 percent of the logging revenues going to 17 counties in Western Oregon.

The Association of O&C Counties, which represents those governments, argues that O&C Lands can't be included in the national monument because commercial logging is prohibited within its boundaries.



Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

According to the complaint, the federal government has repeatedly backed off from including portions of the O&C Lands within a national monument, a wilderness area or a state park.

In 1986, the federal government concluded that O&C Lands may only be included in a plan to protect the threatened spotted owl if it doesn't conflict with timber production, the complaint said.

Counties affected by the expansion were caught by surprise by the Obama administration's announcement and had no input on the decision, said Rocky McVay, executive director of the association.

"We're very disappointed we weren't brought into this early on," he said.

It's possible that ranchers and inholding landowners may also file lawsuits against the expansion, McVay said.

The Murphy Co., an Oregon veneer and plywood manufacturer, and Murphy Timber Investments, an Oregon forest landowner, have filed a lawsuit over the decision, largely on the same legal grounds.

Both lawsuits have asked a federal judge to declare that

expanding the national monument onto O&C Lands exceeds presidential authority.

McVay said his group hasn't been in touch with the Trump administration about the lawsuit and whether the expansion could be rolled back under a settlement deal.

"We have to wait and see. The ink hasn't quite dried on it yet," he said, noting that Ryan Zinke, the nominee to head the Interior Department, hasn't yet been confirmed by the Senate.

The Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, an environmental group in the area, believes the acreage added to the national monument is valuable beyond its extractive uses, said Jeanine Moy, outreach director for the group.

"There are not many places that are as biologically diverse as this region," she said.

The lawsuit's understanding of the O&C Act is too narrow, as the statute also recognizes the importance of preserving stream flows and recreational uses, Moy said.

"Counties have largely interpreted it as 'timber first' when the Act doesn't necessarily say that," she said.

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