



Don Jenkins/Capital Press File
Ramon Torres, president of the union Familias Unidas por la Justicia, speaks at a workers' forum Feb. 27 in Olympia. The union has reached a tentative contract agreement with Sakuma Brothers Farms in northwest Washington.

Washington berry farm reaches deal with union

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

A new farmworker union reached a tentative two-year contract agreement Saturday with Sakuma Brothers Farms, a northwest Washington berry grower that has been embroiled in labor unrest for several years.

The company said in a statement that the agreement will create a partnership beneficial to both parties and end the long labor dispute. Neither party disclosed terms of the contract, which the union said will be voted on by its members in the coming week.

Sakuma, based in Burlington in Skagit County, has been the target of lawsuits, pickets and boycotts since 2013. The strife has affected farms throughout Washington. The state Supreme Court ruled in 2015 that Sakuma must pay piece-rate workers separately for 10-minute rest breaks, an interpretation of state law that upended standard industry practices.

The case spawned a broader lawsuit against another fruit company that will determine whether piece-rate workers also must be paid separately for such non-picking tasks as moving equipment and attending meetings. The Supreme Court has accepted the case.

Sakuma agreed last year to let its workers decide whether to be represented by a union. Workers voted in a supervised election in September to be represented by the newly formed Familias Unidas por la Justicia.

"This is a great victory for all our members that harvest berries at Sakuma Farms, and we are ready to start the berry season later this month with full collective bargaining rights in place," the union posted Monday on Facebook. "We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial partnership with Skagit County's largest berry producer."

The union said it has more than 500 members. The agreement, if ratified, will cover the 2017 harvest, which Sakuma estimated will begin by the end of June.

Chelan Fresh to market for Columbia Valley

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

CHELAN, Wash. — Chelan Fresh Marketing has added another company to the list of companies for which it markets fruit.

Columbia Valley Fruit, of Union Gap, will start selling its organic and conventional apples through Chelan Fresh on Sept. 1, the companies announced June 13.

It comes a month after Chelan Fresh, of Chelan, and Borton Fruit, of Yakima, announced a similar agreement, also starting Sept. 1.

"This deal completes what we're after with organic and completes our varietal mix with conventional and organic," Tom Riggan, president of Chelan Fresh, said of the Columbia



Courtesy Columbia Valley Fruit

From left are Columbia Valley Fruit's partners Orlin Knutson, Tom Tudor, Bill Monson, Mark Tudor and Chris Vizena.

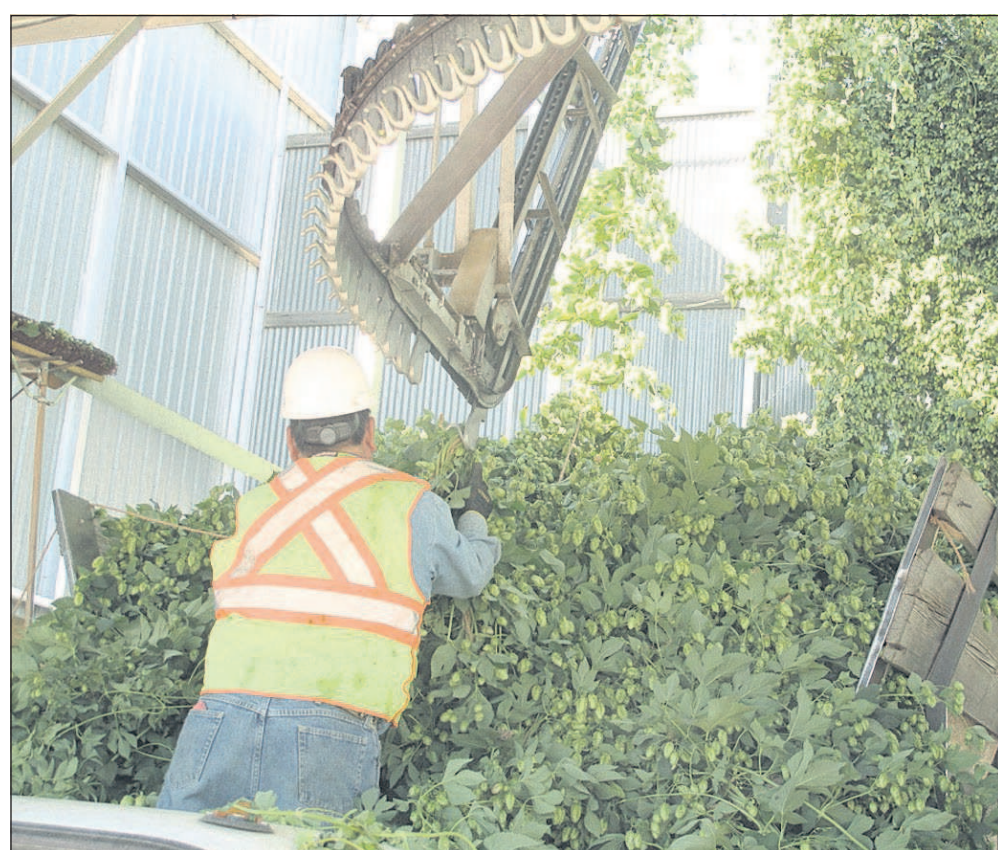
Valley Fruit deal.

"Gala, Fuji, Granny Smith and Honeycrisp are their main organics, which are high-demand varieties. We need more of those," Riggan said.

Chelan Fresh has retail customers wanting more of those varieties than it can supply, he said.

No other agreements are imminent, but Chelan Fresh is not ruling out more in the future, Riggan said. "We will continue to grow according to our customer needs," he said.

"Our growers are our top priority, whether it be providing support and guidance to produce great quality fruit or mak-



Sean Ellis/Capital Press File

Hops are strung for processing last September in southwestern Idaho. Idaho remains the No. 3 hop producer in the U.S., behind Washington state and Oregon, according to a new National Agricultural Statistics Service report.

Northwest hop acreage increases by 6 percent

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

MOXEE, Wash. — Washington, Oregon and Idaho are forecast to set another record in hop acreage, but it might be the last in a while because hop inventory reports have indicated supply is catching demand.

Hop area strung for harvest in the three states this year is estimated at 54,135 acres, 6 percent more than the 2016 crop of 50,857 acres, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service.

With 38,921 acres, Washington accounts for 72 percent of the U.S. acreage. Oregon, with 8,045 acres, is 15 percent of the acreage, and Idaho, with 7,169, is 13 percent of the estimate, NASS said.

Idaho had the largest increase, at 27 percent, and growers there had been thinking they might overtake Oregon this year.

Cascade, Centennial, Citra, Simcoe and Zeus are the top five hop varieties strung.

In March, U.S. hop stocks were up over the previous March for the second straight year. Growers, dealers and brewers had 140 million pounds on hand March 1 compared to 128 million pounds a year earlier.

That showed the line had been crossed from undersupply to oversupply, industry sources said.

Ann George, executive director of Hop Growers of America and the Washington Hop Commission in Moxee, said some varieties will have

substantial carryover while a few specialty varieties may remain undersupplied.

For years the expansion of small, craft breweries has fueled the need for more aroma hop varieties. Not only has acreage caught up with their needs but big brewers are losing market share worldwide because of increased competition from other beverages, she said.

Prices will remain strong in 2017 but will start to drop in 2018 and probably more dramatically in 2019, Pete Mahony, director of supply chain management and purchasing for John I. Haas, a major processor and grower in Yakima, has said.

Acreage increased 17 percent last year, he said.

ing strategic moves to assure top returns for their efforts," said Orlin Knutson, partner and spokesman for Columbia Valley Fruit.

He said he's confident the market access achieved through the deal will provide Columbia's growers with "exciting economic opportunities well into the future."

Columbia has been marketing with Oneonta Starr Ranch Growers, in Wenatchee, and will continue to sell its organic cherries and stone fruit through Oneonta this season before switching that to Chelan Fresh next season, Riggan said.

Knutson has been growing tree fruit in the Mattawa area for more than 30 years. He first received organic certification in 1988.

He will continue operating

Columbia Valley Fruit as an independent grower and packer with partners Mark and Tom Tudor, Chris Vizena and Bill Monson.

Established in 2004, Chelan Fresh is the marketing company for Chelan Fruit Cooperative; Gebbers Farms, Brewster; Crane & Crane, Brewster; Apple House, Pateros; and now Borton Fruit and Columbia Valley Fruit.

Columbia does not want to disclose its fruit volumes, Riggan said.

Chelan Fresh was marketing about 18 million boxes of fruit annually and with the Borton deal will market about 25 million boxes, making it one of the largest marketers in the state. With the Borton deal, it's one of the largest providers of Honeycrisp.



John O'Connell/Capital Press File

Wheat is harvested in Eastern Idaho in late July in this file photo. The Idaho Wheat Commission has warned the University of Idaho it could pull its research funding if royalties from wheat varieties developed by the university aren't put back into the breeding program.

Idaho Wheat Commission takes firm stance on royalty split issue

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — Idaho Wheat Commission members told University of Idaho officials in no uncertain terms June 7 that they expect most of the royalties generated from public wheat varieties to be put back into the university's wheat breeding program.

Three of UI's publicly released wheat varieties — UI Magic, UI Palouse and UI Castle — have generated \$400,000 in royalties the past two years.

But the university's formula for how those royalties are distributed does not include putting money back into the wheat breeding program.

Wheat commission members have been in discussions with UI officials about changing that formula to ensure at least 60 percent of the royalties go back into the program.

But commissioners, who are also growers, told the university general counsel Kent Nelson during a conference call that they expect the issue to be resolved quickly.

IWC Commissioner Bill Flory said he was close to making a motion to withhold all of the commission's wheat research funding to the university until that happens.

"I'll just cut to the chase," he said. "We expect senior management to grab a hold of this and get it fixed because soon isn't quick enough."

Flory said UI administration should "understand the seriousness and magnitude of this. I expect them to negoti-

ate in good faith and quickly." Nelson told IWC members he was speaking to them as a representative of UI's administration and he said, "That is a process the university is already engaged in and committed to. We are serious about this."

IWC Commissioner Ned Moon told Capital Press that royalties from UI's public wheat varieties haven't been an issue until recently because there traditionally have been no royalties involved with them.

But royalties are now in play because of a public-private partnership between the IWC, university and Limagrain Cereal Seeds reached in 2012.

IWC Executive Director Blaine Jacobson pointed out that the IWC provides more money — about \$1.25 million annually — to UI for agricultural research than any farm commission in Idaho.

Jacobson said the commission is starting to get pushback from growers who feel they are being double-taxed.

"The growers already paid for variety development," he said. "Then when those varieties generate royalties, the expectation is that those royalties go back into the program. There really is no justification for that money to go anywhere else."

Under UI's current royalty distribution formula, 20 percent goes to the college to distribute as it wants, 40 percent goes to the university's office of technology and 40 percent goes to the inventors to do as they wish with it.

IWC officials want at least 60 percent to go back into the wheat breeding program.

Commissioners said their hard stance on the issue wasn't a reflection of how they feel about UI leadership — they made it clear they support it — but they also were clear they expected the issue to be addressed immediately.

"We feel we have an excellent team there but we need to get something done," said IWC Commissioner "Gene-see" Joe Anderson.

FAST UNLOADING CAPABILITY

2044 & 2054 PROPUSH® BOX SPREADERS

- Simple push-off design with no chains for fewer moving parts
- Poly floor and sides promote self-cleaning to prevent material buildup
- Wide, consistent, 25' to 30' spread pattern

440 & 540 heaped cu. ft. capacities

INVEST IN QUALITY®

KuhnNorthAmerica.com

<p>Torrence's Farm Implements Brawley, CA Heber, CA Thermal, CA</p>	<p>Tri-County Mixer Sales Manteca, CA Belcorp Ag Merced, CA Modesto, CA Santa Rosa, CA</p>	<p>Valley Truck and Tractor Willows, CA Woodland, CA Yuba City, CA</p>	<p>Papé Machinery Fall River Mills, CA Cornellus, OR Madras, OR Merrill, OR</p>	<p>Central Machinery Sales Hermiston, OR Moses Lake, WA Pasco, WA Sunnyside, WA</p>
<p>Escalon Portable Welding Escalon, CA</p>	<p>Agnaldo's Welding Tipton, CA</p>	<p>Roth Ag-Construction & Equipment Caldwell, ID</p>	<p>Boyd's Implement Tillamook, OR</p>	<p>Washington Tractor Chehalis, WA Quincy, WA Sumner, WA Yakima, WA</p>
<p>Fernbridge Tractor Fortuna, CA</p>		<p>Mitch's Repair Jerome, ID</p>	<p>Farmers Equipment Burlington, WA Lynden, WA</p>	
<p>Visit your local Kuhn Knight Dealer today!</p>				

LEGAL

CHERRY AVENUE STORAGE
2680 Cherry Ave. NE
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 399-7454

AUCTION

Sat., July 1st • 10 a.m.

- Unit 4 - Bryan VanDyke
- Unit 5 - Abe Schworak
- Unit 73 - Miriam Flores
- Unit 75 - Lisa Gayman
- Unit 116 Andrew Sosa
- Unit 129 - Jackie Hill
- Unit 136 - Alison Davis
- Unit 138 - 185 - Rachel Choudry
- Unit 194 - Michelle Darr
- Unit A-1 - Herminia Barboza

Cherry Avenue Storage reserves the right to refuse any and all bids

NEW ITEMS!

1 1/2 QT. BASKETS and (3) PINT TRAYS

ROSE PAPER PRODUCTS, INC.

503-588-8313

2561 Pringle Rd. SE
Salem, OR

Call for Pricing.
Subject to stock on hand.

Delivery Available