

Extended heat wave slowing crop growth

Water is plentiful, but unrelenting heat makes it hard for farmers to keep their crops wet

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

NAMPA, Idaho — Farmers in the Treasure Valley of Idaho and Oregon are struggling to keep their plants watered and wet during a lengthy heat wave that could threaten a 142-year-old record.

“Trying to keep enough water on everything is definitely a battle,” said Meridian farmer Richard Durrant.

This July was the second hottest on record in Boise in southwestern Idaho and across the border in Ontario, Ore., it was even hotter. The average high temperature for the month was 99 degrees.

For this region, “That is just scorching hot,” said Jay Breidenbach, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

The high temperature exceeded 100 degrees in Ontario 11 times in July and 10 times in Boise and August hasn’t brought any relief so far. The high temperature for the first five days of August is expected to exceed 100 degrees in Ontario.

Thankfully, there’s plenty of water for irrigators in the region this year but the un-



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

A hay field is irrigated in Nampa, Idaho, Aug. 3. Farmers in the Treasure Valley of Idaho and Oregon are struggling to keep their crops wet during a lengthy hot spell that is threatening a 142-year-old record.

relenting heat is making it a struggle for farmers to keep their crops wet, said Meridian farmer Drew Eggers.

“It’s not like we don’t have enough water but you wish you could go faster across the

field,” he said.

“We’re trying to keep water on them the best we can but when you have this kind of heat for this period of time, it stresses the plants and hurts yields,” Eggers said.

Breidenbach said the high temperature in Boise had reached at least 90 degrees for 35 straight days as of Aug. 3, the fourth-longest stretch in recorded history for the region.

The longest such streak is 50 days, recorded in 1875, and there is a chance that record could fall this year, Breidenbach said.

The modern day record of 44 straight days above 90, set

in 1994, is certainly within reach, Breidenbach said.

The heat has affected the yield and crops in the region such as onions, said Stuart Reitz, an Oregon State University Extension cropping systems agent in Ontario.

“When it stays this hot for so long, plants like onions shut down,” he said. “It’s not doing a lot of the crops any good.”

Nyssa, Ore., onion farmer Paul Skeen some onion tops in the region are starting to lie down.

“That means they are starting their final process and they aren’t very big,” he said.

The biggest bulb onions grown in this region, colossals and super colossals, fetch a premium price but the heat wave could result in a shortage of those sizes this year, Skeen said.

“As of right now, it appears that we could be down a little in our biggest sizes because of this heat,” he said.

Durrant, who also purchases wheat from other growers, said the heat is affecting wheat yields but so far, test weights haven’t been down as much as he had feared.

The heat has been hard on fruit crops in the area such as apples and peaches, said Williamson Orchards manager Michael Williamson.

“The heat really slows fruit growth down,” Williamson said.

“It almost puts fruit maturity on pause.”

WSDA fines Davenport seed company for pesticide release

Maximum fine imposed after 11 men hospitalized

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press



a garbage truck driver, a Lincoln County sheriff’s deputy and seven firefighters — were kept in hospitals for 24 to 48 hours for observation. At least one man had breathing problems that lasted into the following week, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture.

According to WSDA, Orvis and another employee put out 20 to 30 cloth bags, each containing 20 to 30 Fumitoxin tablets to fumigate two buildings on May 26, 2016.

Orvis opened the buildings May 31, collected the bags and put them into a trash bin, which was emptied by the garbage truck driver June 3, according to WSDA. A couple of hours later, the driver called 911 to report smoke coming from the truck.

While waiting for firefighters, the driver climbed on top of the truck, looked inside and

breathed in smoke.

Later in the day, he reported having a headache and coughing up greenish phlegm, according to WSDA.

Escorted by firefighters and the sheriff’s deputy, the driver continued on to a transfer station and dumped the smoking load. The cloth bags were glowing red and when sprayed with water popped and sent up more smoke, according to WSDA.

The tablets’ active ingredient, aluminum phosphide, reacts to moisture by releasing potentially lethal phosphine gas, according to WSDA.

Orvis did not have an applicator’s license and was unaware he needed one to apply the fumigant, according to WSDA.

Rainier Seeds grows and processes seeds.

For first-time civil penalties, WSDA can levy fines of up to \$1,100 per violation.

For the company, WSDA multiplied the penalty for each person exposed until hitting a cap of \$7,500 set by state law.

Washington AG says state must dump straight piece-rate pay for farmworkers

Supreme Court to hear case in September

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

to expand a 2015 decision in which the Supreme Court ruled piece-rate farmworkers must be paid separately for 10-minute rest breaks.

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in Carranza v. Dovex on Sept. 14 in Olympia.

Dovex’s attorneys argue piece-rates benefit skilled and industrious workers, but would be impractical if the court decides the pay structure violates Washington’s minimum wage law.

The attorney general’s brief, written by Assistant Attorney General Julian Beattie, argues that “non-picking time is a distinct category of hourly work during which the pieceworker is not earning money.”

The attorney general’s office said it filed the brief because of significant public interest in the case. Ferguson also filed a brief two years ago supporting separate rest-break pay for farmworkers.

Dovex says it ensures piece-rate workers are paid at least minimum wage by tracking all hours an employee

spends on the job in a week. If piece-rate earnings fall short of minimum wage, the worker’s pay is increased, according to court records.

The farmworkers’ attorney, Marc Cote, argues that the practice, known as “work-week averaging,” allows the company to use piece-rate pay to finance work for which the employee makes no money.

The attorney general office agrees that end-of-the-week calculations aren’t good enough and that the court should require growers to compensate workers hour by hour.

The company defends work-week averaging as a way to ensure non-hourly farmworkers are paid at least minimum wage. Without a way to reward skilled pickers, harvests will be less efficient and harmful to the economy, according to the company’s brief.

The company also argues that workers return year after year to its orchards, drawn by the chance to earn far more than the minimum wage.

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 <p>JD 8270R, 2014, 871 hours, premium cab, IVT, MFWD, 5 remotes, A/T ready, 800-38 duals, 600-30 frt tires.....\$240,000 McMinnville 91340</p>	 <p>JD 8370R, 2015, 1056 hours, premium cab, ILS, IVT, full auto track, rear 620-46 duals, front 480-34 duals, all new.....\$295,000 McMinnville FD101233</p>	 <p>JD 9360R, 2013, 596 hours, premium cab, PS trans, 4 remotes, bareback 520-42 duals, front weights .\$211,200 Madras DP008265</p>
 <p>JD 5075E, 2016, 183 hours, ROPS, MFWD, 9x3 trans, 25CV's, JD H240 NSL loader, 16.9-28 tires.....\$42,500 Hillsboro GG100418</p>	 <p>JD 9420, 2003, 5284 hours, premium cab, PS trans, 4 remotes, bareback, 800-38 duals, front weights.....\$115,000 Tangent 0P011006</p>	 <p>Challenger MT595B, 2008, 1900 hours, susp. cab, susp. MFWD, CVT, 4 remotes, 480-46 singles, 380-34 frt singles.....\$89,000 Madras T079072</p>
 <p>JD 8530, 2006, 9856 hours, premium cab, IVS, ILS, 4 remotes, 480-46 rear duals, 380-34 frt duals.....\$88,500 McMinnville OD001850</p>	 <p>Case IH 290, 2011, 2714 hours, deluxe cab, MFWD, PS trans, 5 remotes, 380-54 rear duals, 380-34 frt duals.....\$124,900 Walla Walla BRD02229</p>	 <p>Case IH 195, 2009, 5740 hours, deluxe cab, MFWD, PS trans, 3 remotes, 480-42 rear duals, 380-30 frt tires.....\$69,500 Fall River Mills ABH40541</p>
HAY EQUIPMENT	HAY EQUIPMENT	HAY EQUIPMENT
 <p>NH BB960 baler, 2001, 3x4' bales, double tie knotter, single axle.....\$33,000 Madras 74180048</p>	 <p>MF 2270XD baler, 2015, 3x4 LSB, single axle, roller chute, auto controls, knotter fan.....\$115,000 Harrisburg FHB07229</p>	 <p>MF 2170 baler, 2008, 3x4' bales, single axle, hay boss kit, roller chute.....\$67,000 Merrill HT74465</p>
 <p>MF 2170 baler, 2012, low bale count, single axle, roller chute.....\$85,000 Madras CHB04296</p>	 <p>Kuhn FC13R baler, 2013, never used tractor mounted triple mower conditioner.....\$89,000 Hillsboro C0038</p>	 <p>MF 2170 baler, 2009, 3x4' bales, single axle, roller chute, double knotter, 50,000 bales.....\$51,000 McMinnville HU74242</p>
COMBINES	COMBINES	COMBINES
 <p>MF 8780XP combine, 2000, 2470 hours, small grain, Hillco Leveler, rotary, 25' cutting platform, chaff spreader, duals.....\$55,000 Walla Walla OMJ87146</p>	 <p>JD 5670, 2014, 464 hours, small grain, A/T ready, Pro Drive, JD 615P belt pickup platform.....\$290,400 Merrill 765545</p>	 <p>JD T670, 2009, 1148 hours, small grain, conventional separator, grass seed combine.....\$175,000 Donald OA084501</p>
 <p>JD 9670 combine, 2008, 2046 hours, rotary, small grain, 615P BPU platform, sidehill cleaning shoe.....\$185,000 McMinnville 05725903</p>	 <p>JD 5680, 2012, 664 hours, small grain, 35% Rahco leveler, 635F platform and cart, A/T ready.....\$347,600 Walla Walla 747035</p>	 <p>Case IH 2188 combine, 5133 hours, rotary, small grain, 1015 BPU platform.....\$55,000 Harrisburg C0195413</p>
 <p>Case IH 2188 combine, 4691 hours, rotary, small grain, 1015 BPU platform.....\$55,000 Harrisburg C0193663</p>	 <p>JD 5680, 2013, 881 hours, small grain, 35% Rahco Leveler, 635F platform and cart, A/T ready.....\$388,700 Four Lakes 755668</p>	 <p>JD 9670 combine, 2008, 2747 hours, rotary, small grain, 615P BPU platform, sidehill clearing packages.....\$153,195 Salem 05726119</p>

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