

Record cherry crop reaching finish line

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Wash. — The Pacific Northwest is closing in on the end of a sweet cherry harvest memorable for record volume, great weather and quality and likely one of the longest.

Picking began June 6 in Mattawa, Wash., and will finish about the end of August in high-elevation orchards near Hood River, Ore., and Wenatchee, Chelan and Brewster, Wash. It will be an 80- to 90-day season.

Through Aug. 3, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana shipped 25.5 million, 20-pound boxes of cherries, eclipsing the previous record of 23.2 million boxes in 2014, according to Northwest Cherry Growers, the industry's promotional arm in Yakima.

Washington typically grows 80 to 85 percent of the five-state crop and more than 60 percent of the national crop. Washington's crop value was \$471 million in 2016, according to USDA.

An Aug. 11 NCG email newsletter indicates the Northwest could finish at 27.5 million boxes since 2.4 million had been picked in August with likely 2 million to go.

A record 15.2 million boxes were shipped in July. Shipments averaged 500,000 boxes or more per day for more than 30 days.

NCG's promotions and re-

tail ads were big going into the Fourth of July and have continued through summer, which has been important to compete with heavy volumes of other fruits, said James Michael, NCG vice president of promotions.

"It was critical for us to have the volume and the No. 1 advertised item in fruit for about a month," Michael said.

"It's been an interesting year. Phenomenal volume, which caused a lot of price pressure, but that's how to build new markets. We went deeper into a lot of export markets in Asia, making investments on price to grow those markets," said Tim Evans, general sales manager of Chelan Fresh Marketing, a large cherry sales desk.

"A lot of people around the globe don't buy fresh cherries so there's a lot of room for growth," he said.

The large crop also led to fruit not being as large as last year. Many packers decided not to pack 11.5-row cherries and smaller. Size is the number of cherries in one row of a 20-pound box.

"This year was heavy to 10 and 10.5-row and last year 55 percent of our fruit was 9.5-row and larger," Evans said.

Wholesale prices sagged into the mid to upper \$20s per box in July from the heavy volume, which was "very tough on growers," Evans said. Prices rebounded "quite well" to \$35 to \$50 in August, he said.

Above-average juice grape crop expected

Demand down due to sugared drink backlash, more beverage choices

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SUNNYSIDE, Wash. — Industry members expect an above-average juice grape crop, but low market demand.

"If the weather holds, we should have a pretty good one," Craig Bardwell said of the harvest, slated to begin in mid-September.

Bardwell, senior viticulture specialist for the National Grape Cooperative, based in Grandview, Wash., expects an above-average Concord, or purple, crop, about 9.5 tons per acre compared to an average of 9 acres per acre.

Niagara, or white, grapes will be close to 12 tons per acre, also above the 10.9 ton per acre average, Bardwell said.

"Considering that last year we had almost a 17-ton per acre average, we're quite surprised that they've come back as well as they have," Bardwell said. "We actually expected the Niagara crop to be down a little bit more than it is because of how large a crop it was last year, but it's actually coming back quite nicely."

Some growers' Niagara grapes do show signs of stress, Bardwell said.

Sunnyside, Wash., farmer Art den Hoed raises Concord and Niagara juice grapes on 280 acres.

Harvest will begin around Sept. 18. The berries appear to be a little smaller, but den Hoed reported a bigger num-



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

ber of bunches. The state yield average is about 8 tons to 8.5 tons per acre, den Hoed said. He expects his crop to get about 10 tons to 12 tons per acre.

Historically, Washington juice grapes don't see much disease or insect pressure. Powdery mildew occurs under the right conditions, but is rare, Bardwell said.

"They're pretty tolerant," den Hoed said. "Nothing affects them, generally. On the East Coast, it's a different deal, but over here in this arid climate, it's not a problem."

Juice grapes are generally produced by the ton, without the precision required for a wine grape, enabling den Hoed to harvest mechanically.

Prices are down to \$100 to \$120 per ton, which is not profitable, den Hoed said. He'd prefer to see \$160 to \$180 per ton.

"It's kind of a slump in the

market at the moment, and it seems to be lasting a little longer than everybody thought it would," he said.

Because of the pressure, some growers are replacing juice grapes with wine grapes, hops or orchards, but not enough to see an impact on prices, den Hoed said.

"It's the kind of ground that's desirable for other things," he said.

In five of the last six years, the grape crop has been above average in all growing regions, Bardwell said. The overall supply hasn't shrunk even though acreage declined. In 2005, Washington had 26,000 acres of Concorde. Today, it's closer to 18,000 and 19,000 acres.

Niagara grape acreage is about 12,000 acres.

The slump is occurring throughout the fruit juice industry, with all juices experiencing a decline in sales,

Bardwell said.

"Obviously when you have Dr. Oz go on TV and tell the audience they shouldn't be drinking apple juice or grape juice because of the high sugar, that doesn't help," he said.

Customers also have more beverage choices when they walk into a grocery store than they did 20 years ago, Bardwell said.

"It kind of dilutes the market for everyone," he said.

The industry is looking for other products to market the grapes, including new products that aren't jams or jellies, or as ingredients, Bardwell said.

Den Hoed believes the Concord grape is getting caught up in the decline by mistake.

"It's a natural sugar drink," he said. "A Concord grape drink (by) itself, I feel, is good. It's got antioxidants in it like a glass of red wine."

Idaho could pass Oregon this year as No. 2 hop state

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

WILDER, Idaho — Idaho is projected to pass Oregon this year to become the second-largest hop-producing state in the nation.

According to Aug. 10 projections by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, Idaho hop growers will produce 12.83 million pounds of hops in 2017 and Oregon farmers will produce 12.75 million pounds.

"We have a chance" at that No. 2 spot, said Idaho hop grower Mike Gooding. "It's going to be close."

Gooding said his family has been producing hops in Idaho for 70 years "and Idaho has always been in the third spot for as long as anybody can remember."

Nabbing the No. 2 spot — Washington is an unchallenged No. 1 with an estimated 72 million pounds this year — won't mean anything other than bragging rights, Gooding said, but it is a good sign of the health of the Idaho industry.

Idaho has been bearing down hard on Oregon for the No. 2 spot for several years and even if the state doesn't pass Oregon this year, it appears it's only a matter of time before that happens.

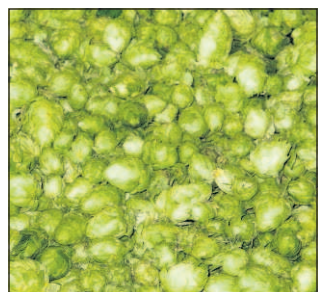
Idaho hop acres have soared from 3,743 in 2014 to 7,169 in 2017.

During that same period, Oregon's hop acres have also increased, although more slowly, from 5,410 in 2014 to 8,045 in 2017.

But average yield per acre is greater in Idaho — hop yields are forecast to be 1,790 pounds per acre in Idaho this year and 1,596 pounds in Oregon.

NASS projects that the difference in yields will nudge Idaho past Oregon this year.

Idaho yields are higher because the state's hop farmers grow more of the high-yielding, high-alpha varieties, which grow better in hot, dry climates such as southwestern



Capital Press File

Higher yields could help Idaho pass Oregon as the No. 2 hop-producing state.

Idaho, where most of Idaho's hops are produced, Gooding said.

Those high-alpha varieties produce much higher yields than the aroma varieties popular in Oregon's hop growing region of Marion and Polk counties, said Oregon Hop Commission Administrator Michelle Palacios.

The difference in land availability and expense between the states' hop growing regions is a big reason Idaho has added more acres in recent years, Palacios said.

She said Oregon's hop industry has experienced healthy growth in recent years and Idaho's success has not come at Oregon's expense and is good for the overall domestic hop industry.

"I don't think there are going to be any hard feelings," Palacios said of the possibility her state could lose its No. 2 hop ranking. "We are still being very successful in our corner of the world. We feel good any time the U.S. hop industry is successful."

While the battle for the No. 2 spot will be close this year, Gooding said Idaho's first-year, or baby, hops likely won't yield as well as some people thought they would when NASS gathered the data it used for its projections.

"The way the babies look, I don't know that we'll pass Oregon this year," he said. "Those babies are not turning out the way people expected when that information was gathered."

Almond growers anticipate another record as harvest begins

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

TEHAMA, Calif. — The harvest of almonds in California's Central Valley is off to a late but abundant start as growers bring in an anticipated record crop.

Tehama Angus Ranch in the northern Sacramento Valley started shaking trees about two weeks ago, and now nearly all of its Nonpareils are off the ground, farmer Eric Borrer said.

"Our yields are probably just a little better than last year," he said. "It's not a bumper crop but a decent crop."

Nearby, Red Bluff grower Tyler Christensen said he is seeing "decent" yields after getting off to a late start because of weather.

"I think more than anything, (the challenge is) just keeping everything under control with all this heat," Christensen said. "We've been irrigating a little heavier. We came off the drought and thought everything would be a little easier this year, but we're still having to irrigate more."



Tim Hearden/Capital Press

Eric Borrer of Tehama Angus Ranch near Tehama, Calif., checks a couple of almonds from a pile that is about to be swept up on Aug. 17. The farm has been harvesting almonds for about two weeks, with nearly all of its Nonpareils having been picked up.

Growers in the Golden State expect to harvest 2.25 billion meat pounds this year, a more than 5 percent increase from the record-setting 2016 production of 2.14 billion meat pounds, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

The average nut set per tree this year is 5,714, down 7.2 percent from the 2016 crop, reports the NASS office in Sacramento. But bearing acreage is expected to reach the 1 million-acre mark this year, up from 940,000 acres

last year, according to NASS.

This year's crop has been resilient amid weather extremes. Winter storms and cold weather extended the bloom in February and March, then growers had to prevent damage from heat as Central Valley temperatures have soared well into the triple digits for several stretches this summer.

The Nonpareil harvest proceeds as orchard ground preparation has continued around the state for later vari-

eties, according to NASS.

The anticipated record crop comes as shipments have so far kept pace with production. The industry capped off a big shipping year at the end of July, as domestic shipments and exports were up 14 percent and 17 percent, respectively, for the 2016-17 crop year, according to the Almond Board of California.

The shipments have helped prices stabilize in recent months after a price slide that began in late 2015, with prices falling by nearly half from the more than \$4 a pound that was paid for some almonds during the 2014 crop year.

"The price is holding steady, and steady is good," Borrer said.

With harvest underway, the Almond Board is reminding growers of its recommended management practices for reducing dust.

Such practices include starting with a clean orchard, planning the route to avoid extra passes, going low with sweepers but not too low, using wire tires and trying slow speeds and fans, spokesman Kyle Kapustka said.



ROSE PAPER PRODUCTS, INC.

503-588-8313
2561 Pringle Rd. SE
Salem, OR

FOB Sale: Price Subject to stock on hand

PULP BERRY BASKETS FULL CLEARANCE SALE!

Pints - \$29.08/case
1/2 Pints - \$43.53/case



Delivery Available to FOB Salem, OR




CAPITOL CHEVROLET IS YOUR TRUCK HEADQUARTERS

CHEVY SUMMER DRIVE

OVER 180 TRUCKS IN STOCK!

TEST DRIVE YOURS TODAY!



NEW 2017 CHEVROLET SILVERADO

UP TO **\$15,000 OFF MSRP**

*MSRP. Excludes taxes, license, title, and dealer fees. Offer good on select models. Offer ends 8/31/17. ©2017 GM Corp. All rights reserved.

2855 Maple Ave. NE
Salem, Oregon



FIND NEW ROADS

VIEW OUR ENTIRE INVENTORY OF NEW & PRE-OWNED MODELS AT

capitol-chevy.com

800-888-0591