



# Capital Press

## The West's Ag Weekly

# A GROWING

Jose Orosco and David Flores move ladders to pick d'Anjou pears Sept. 11 in McCoy Orchard near Cashmere, Wash.

# PROBLEM

Washington growers asked for 43 percent more foreign guestworkers to work crops this year, indicative of a continuing shortage of domestic labor

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

**U**.S. farmers are increasingly relying on foreign guestworkers to tend and harvest their crops as the number of domestic farmworkers continues to shrink.

In Washington state, farmers, orchardists and others who raise labor-intensive crops this year asked for 18,796 guestworkers — 43 percent more than last year and the most ever.

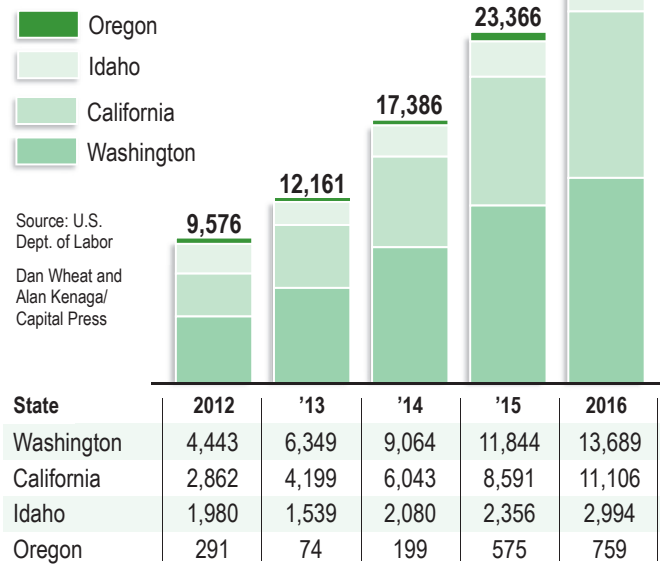
The growing number of H-2A-visa foreign guestworkers is evidence of what growers describe as an alarming shortage of workers to handle tree fruit, berries, vegetables, hops, wine grapes and any crops that require lots of workers.

“People not using H-2A think they can just raise wages and get more workers. In the past, that worked. It no longer does. There’s just not the workers out there,” said Dan Fazio, executive director of the Olympia-based farm labor association WAFLA. The association recruits the vast majority of H-2A workers hired in the state, mostly for tree fruit growers.

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## H-2A visas issued for Northwest, California

(Workers certified by U.S. Dept. of Labor)



Photos by Dan Wheat/Capital Press  
Anna Lemus picks d'Anjou pears at McCoy Orchard near Cashmere, Wash., on Sept. 11. The picker shortage appears less acute in the Wenatchee Valley this fall, but most growers say they need more pickers.

## Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument's future remains cloudy

Leaked report from Trump administration is ambiguous about details

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

The future of Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument remains cloudy despite the details revealed in a recent leaked report from the Trump administration. The memorandum to President

Donald Trump from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke includes recommendations for 10 national monuments, including the Cascade-Siskiyou, which was nearly doubled in size by the Obama administration early this year.

Originally, the monument consisted of 53,000 acres, with private prop-

erty purchases incrementally adding 13,000 acres over the years. In 2017, the monument expanded onto nearly 48,000 acres of public land.

While Zinke says the monument's boundary "should be revised" to remove so-called "O&C Lands" that are dedicated to timber production and "to reduce impacts

on private lands," the report doesn't state exactly how many acres should be cut, or where.

Critics and supporters of the expansion agree it's unclear what action Trump may take on the recommendations, given the disputes over management of O&C Lands.

The federal government initially granted those 2.4 million acres to a railroad connecting Oregon and California, but then repossessed the

property in 1937 when grant conditions were breached.

The Oregon & California Revested Lands Act required that the property be permanently managed for a "sustained yield" of timber harvest. For this reason, critics of the expansion say O&C Lands can't be included in the monument, where commercial logging is prohibited.

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## Drought spreads across three-quarters of Washington, half of Oregon

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

Drought conditions are spreading rapidly across Washington and Oregon, federal officials reported Sept. 14, though cooler and wetter weather is expected to settle over the Northwest during the last half of September.

A moderate drought prevails over 77 percent of Washington, according to the U.S. Drought Moni-

tor, while the northern 43 percent of Oregon has fallen into a moderate drought.

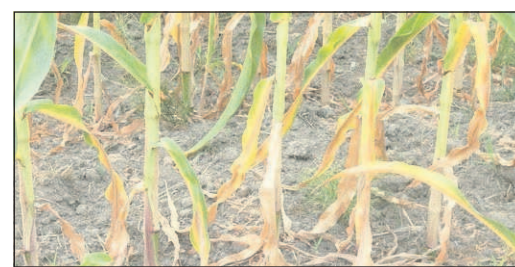
"This is a snapshot of what's happening," Washington State Assistant Climatologist Karin Bumbaco said. "If the forecast of precipitation does happen, I imagine the drought monitor won't get worse, but it will take some time to pull out of the precipitation deficit."

Drought conditions have appeared at the end of a hot and dry

summer in the Pacific Northwest. Two weeks ago, less than 2 percent of Washington was in a drought, while no part of Oregon was in a drought. The southern half of Oregon remains untouched by drought.

Portions of Central Washington also are not in drought. "That area is above-normal (precipitation) as opposed to the rest of the state," Bumbaco said.

Turn to **DROUGHT**, Page 12



Don Jenkins/Capital Press  
Corn grows in dry ground in southwest Washington. A moderate drought now covers 77 percent of the state, the U.S. Drought Monitor reported Sept. 14.



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