

Sugar beets ‘nicest looking I’ve ever seen’

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Sid Freeman of Sunny View Farms north of Caldwell, Idaho, likes what he sees in his sugar beet crop.

“We’ve got some of the nicest-looking sugar beets I’ve ever seen, in general,” he said.

Sugar beets in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon appear to be on their way to high yields and strong sugar content — an improvement over the late-to-plant 2017 crop — though field analysts advise growers to remain vigilant in scouting and treating for diseases and pests.

Freeman figured his beets would do well when he noticed his nearby corn was taller than usual in early July.

“That indicated the growing environment for the spring was very good,” he said July 12. “Anything planted early looks very well.”

Beets benefited from higher-than normal heat units — high temperatures and the number of ideal “growing-degree days” — and ample rain that helped keep soil moist, Freeman said.

Growers made the most of the good conditions by picking the right seeds, planting them using precision-agriculture approaches, and developing solid plans for using fertilizer and any chemicals, he said.

“The farmer controlled all the variables he could, and Mother Nature cooperated very well,” Freeman said.

Wendell Robinson, southwest Idaho district agriculture manager for Boise-based Amalgamated Sugar, said the



Amalgamated Sugar
Lance Pitcher, left, and Wendell Robinson, both of Amalgamated Sugar, evaluate a sugar beet field near Middleton, Idaho, on July 16.

area’s sugar beet crop looks good overall. Grower-owned Amalgamated grows beets and processes them into sugar at its factories.

“We are still actively scouting” for pests and diseases, he said. “Overall, the crop looks very healthy at this point. We’re watching data for pests and diseases, but I think we’ve still got a good crop.”

More growing days typically mean higher potential sugar accumulation in the beet root and greater yield given the longer growing season, Robinson said.

A handful of diseases and insect pests have shown up in Idaho sugar beet fields, though in controllable numbers, said Lance Pitcher, who works with growers as a crop consultant with Amalgamated.

“Now is probably prime time, the best time for treatment,” he said July 16. Waiting until mid-August to treat would substantially increase the risk that beet yield and quality would drop due to diseases and pests, he said.

Pitcher saw powdery mildew earlier than usual, though not necessarily in alarming amounts. Cercospora leaf spot has become more prevalent, and “we are starting to see black bean aphid more,” he said.

Black bean aphid so far is not widespread, he said. In heavy populations, it can stunt plants and transmit the Western Yellows Virus.

Pitcher said he also has seen army worms and grasshoppers in some beet fields. Both can reduce photosynthesis — and, in turn, yields — if their pop-

ulations get high enough, he said.

“Generally they are not a problem, but this year they seem to be a little more prevalent,” he said.

Robinson said black bean aphids and other insects seen thus far “are certainly very treatable at this point.” Amalgamated recently has been helping growers and suppliers recognize and treat for pests and diseases.

He and Pitcher expect 2018 crop yield and sugar content to be between the excellent 2015 and record-high 2016. Last year’s crop produced solid yields overall, but disappointing sugar content.

Galen Lee, who serves on the American Beet Growers Association board and is president of the Nyssa/Nampa Sugar Beet Growers Association, said his beet fields look distinctly better than they did last year. He co-owns Sunnyside Farm LLC outside New Plymouth, Idaho, near the Oregon border.

Snowfall was especially heavy and long-lasting in early 2017 on south Idaho’s western edge. Lee said the cold compacted the ground, one factor in delaying planting and ultimately stalling maturation.

This year, the sugar beet crop at Sunnyside looks good, he said. He sees closed rows of strongly standing plants with canopies sufficient to provide good shade.

“It’s that time of year when we are seeing mildew, so we are spraying for mildew,” Lee said. “And we are just trying to keep water on them, keeping them healthy and going from there.”

Washington farm groups join bid to nip city food taxes

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Soft drink rivals Pepsi and Coke are partners in financing a ballot measure that would bar cities from taxing select foods, like Seattle has done with sweetened beverages.

Initiative I-1634 has the backing of several agricultural organizations, though no Washington city has followed Seattle’s example on soda or targeted other foods, such as beef or dairy products.

“We looked at this and said, ‘What’s the logical progression on food taxes?’” said Dan Wood, executive director of the Washington State Dairy Federation.

“It does not require a big imagination to think about the folks in Seattle deciding they want to put a tax on meat or milk or any other healthy agricultural product,” he said. “We need to get ahead of that and say, ‘It needs to stop.’”

I-1634 petitioners turned in about 360,000 signatures this week for the Secretary of State’s Office to check. It will take 259,622 signatures from registered voters to qualify I-1634 for the Nov. 6 election.

The beverage industry so far has spent \$4.43 million to collect signatures and prepare for a media campaign, according to the Public Disclosure Commission. The Coca-Cola Co. has contributed \$2.2 million, and PepsiCo has put in \$1.7 million. The Dr Pepper Snapple Group and Red Bull North America are the other two major donors.

The Washington Food In-

dustry Association has contributed \$20,000.

The beverage industry launched the campaign, but it hopes to expand its donor base, Yes to Affordable Groceries spokesman Jim Desler said. The campaign has endorsements from the Washington Farm Bureau, the Washington Cattle Cattlemen’s Association and the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, as well as the dairy federation and the Juice Products Association, a national trade association.

The organizers, confident the measure will qualify, held a conference call Monday to kick off the campaign.

Douglas County organic orchardist April Clayton, one of several speakers, cited recent opinion pieces in The New York Times that advocated a tax on beef to check climate change and a tax on “unhealthy foods” to curb obesity.

“The threat of food taxes is real,” Clayton said.

I-1634 would grandfather in Seattle’s 1.75 cent per ounce tax on drinks with sugar, honey and artificial sweeteners. The tax equals 21 cents on a 12-ounce can of soda and went into effect Jan. 1. The city collects the tax from beverage distributors, but presumably at least some of the tax falls to consumers.

“I think you have a real concern among people that this will expand to other places and other groceries as local governments look for revenue sources,” Desler said. “This is really a preventive measure to protect working families and small businesses.”



PROUD TO SUPPORT Members & Families of FFA

Albany - Eugene - Roseburg - Woodburn - Cornelius - Oregon City - Gresham - The Dalles - White City
Redmond - Klamath Falls, OR • Yakima - East Wenatchee - Auburn - Mount Vernon, Marysville, Sequim, WA



www.CoastalFarm.com

29-3/100

Young agriculture educators grow Oregon FFA

CORVALLIS, Ore. — The FFA organization works to develop students into responsible leaders of the future. Once referred to as the “Future Farmers of America,” the student led organization has strayed away from the stereotypical farmers and ranchers, but provides opportunities for students from any background.

Agriculture is not forgotten about, however. At the high school level, local FFA chapters are focused on making “a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through Agriculture Education.” The training and skills building takes place through the lens of the agriculture industry.

Two young agriculture educators from the Oregon State University Agriculture Education Master’s Degree and Teacher Preparation Program are ready to jump into the dynamic agriculture education profession and bring some of the agriculture world into schools.

Abby Lohman student taught at Crater High School in Central Point, Ore. Her favorite part about the experience was getting immersed into the chapter FFA and training students for competitions, especially public speaking career development events. Abby will be teaching at Central High School in Independence, Ore., this fall.

Abby has always wanted to play a role in the agriculture industry after growing up on her family’s vegetable seed operation in the Skagit Valley. She found her niche in education after experiencing the lack of connection and understanding the general public has with farming.

Nels Swenson student taught at Rogue River High School. During the four months of student teaching, he was responsible for developing curriculum and lessons for the six different class periods he taught. “The best and most challenging part of the whole experience was adapting lessons to help students realize they are capable of more than they think; whether that’s improving their grade, disassembling and reassembling a small



The 2018 Oregon State University Agriculture Education Master’s Cohort. From left to right are Director of Teacher Education Josh Stewart, Nels Swenson, Tess Hamby, Maggie Collins, Abby Lohman, Madi Hynes, Heather Brown and Graduate Teaching Assistant Kellie Claflin.

engine or explaining the livestock reproductive system.” Nels will be teaching at Sherman County School in Moro, Ore., in the fall.

Agriculture education and FFA are complementary components of high school agriculture programs across the state. And in each of the 120 programs in the state, the agriculture instructor takes the roll as the FFA advisor as well. This adds many responsibilities to the busy schedule of a school teacher.

This year, seven students at Oregon State University gained first hand experience of what it takes to be an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor during their student teaching experience.

Agriculture education in combination with FFA and independent student Supervised Agricultural Experiences provide optimal leadership development experiences, as well as hands on Career Technical Education within a relevant framework.



RIVERBROOK FARM • HAULING SERVICE
Brooks, OR
www.riverbrooktrucking.com

- Local & Nationwide
- Farm Equipment
- Heavy Equipment



888-393-1819

29-3/106

NW Ag Solutions
OREGON & WASHINGTON

- Hazelnut Consulting
- Hazelnut Management
- Aerial Imaging • Harvesting
- Orchard Aeration
- Field Layout • Orchard Removal

Proud Supporter of FFA



503-602-0684
nwagsolutions.com

29-3/109

Proud Sponsor of FFA




THE TRACTOR STORE
(541) 342-5464
5450 W. 11th, Eugene, OR

29-3/100



Stutzman FARMS
www.stutzman-environmental.com

Proud Supporter of FFA



P.O. Box 307 • Canby, OR 97013
888-877-7665

29-3/106



Klopfenstein Ag Service
Custom Field Tiling

klopfensteinag.com

SILVERTON, OR
503-932-0766



29-3/HOU