



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press  
The Wilco-Hazelnut Growers of Oregon cooperative has finished its new processing facility in Donald, Ore., in time for this year's hazelnut harvest.

## Hazelnut facility ready for upcoming harvest

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

A new processing facility built by the Hazelnut Growers of Oregon cooperative is ready for the next crop of hazelnuts when harvest begins next month.

Work on the new plant in Donald, Ore., broke ground in 2016, shortly after HGO merged with the Wilco farm supply cooperative, which will also operate out of the new location.

A grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony at the facility were scheduled for Aug. 15.

While the building and property are leased from a developer, the cooperative has invested about \$20 million in equipment and other upgrades.

The new facility has more than twice the capacity to process and store hazelnuts than the company's old headquarters in Cornelius, Ore., and was designed with an eye for growth in the hazelnut industry.

Initially, the plant will operate at about 30-40 percent capacity but will likely reach full capacity in three to four years as more newly planted orchards mature, said Tim Ramsey, who was hired as Wilco-HGO's new CEO last year.

About 70,000 acres of hazelnuts are grown by roughly 800 Oregon farmers, with their crop's value averaging about \$100 million in recent years.

"How do we provide the best economic value to hazelnut growers and expand beyond commodity

marketing?" he said.

To that end, the cooperative plans to begin rolling out four product categories made from hazelnuts under the "Oregon Orchards" brand in 2019.

Ramsey said it's too early to disclose specifics about the product lines, other than they're intended to fill "opportunity gaps" in the food retail sector uncovered during market research.

"The grocery industry is always looking for innovative products," he said.

The products will be sold in Wilco's consumer-oriented farm stores as well as other outlets, "from Whole Foods to Winco," Ramsey said.

Though the focus of the new facility is on producing value-added hazelnut products, the cooperative will still process in-shell nuts and isn't "picky" as to the varieties delivered by farmers, he said.

Hazelnuts will be sorted according to size and other qualities, which will determine their ultimate purpose.

In-shell varieties will continue to find a home at the cooperative but the growth will come from kernel varieties used in value-added goods, Ramsey said.

The cooperative is less dependent than its competitors on exports to China, which are currently facing a headwind due to trade tensions, he said.

While the company exports half as many hazelnuts as some other processors, it's not impervious to the trade dispute since tariffs can affect the entire market for Oregon's crop, Ramsey said. "It will impact everyone."

# OSU names new dean for College of Ag

Alan Sams previously led programs at Texas A&M, Clemson

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
Capital Press

A new dean is coming to the Oregon State University College of Agricultural Sciences.

The university on Tuesday named Alan Sams to lead the college, succeeding Dan Arp, who will retire at the end of August.

Sams has spent the last nine years as executive associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University, managing academic programs, personnel and budgeting for one of the largest agricultural colleges in the country, with 350 faculty, 7,800 students and a budget of more than \$69 million.

At Oregon State, Sams will oversee 250 faculty, 2,600 students and a \$90 million research budget. The OSU College of Agricultural Sciences offers 13 undergraduate and graduate degree programs, and works closely with state and federal partners including the USDA, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service and National Institutes of Health.

In a statement released Tuesday by the university,



OSU  
Alan Sams has been named dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University.

Sams said he is excited to join OSU, crediting a "student-centered environment combined with an excellent faculty at the forefront of their fields."

"The breadth and economic importance of agriculture in Oregon, and the interest in environmental sustainability are factors which drew me to Oregon State University," Sams said. "There is a tremendous innovative spirit here, whether it is in production agriculture or food entrepreneurship. Agriculture's role in health, energy and national security is expanding and we need to lead that growth."

Sams will also serve as director of the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station on campus in Corvallis. He begins his new duties Oct. 31. Bill Boggess, executive associate dean of the college, will serve as interim dean from Sept. 1 through Oct. 30 following Arp's retirement.

During his nine years as executive associate dean at Texas A&M, Sams helped the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences increase enrollment by 25 percent, increase its budget by 30 percent and expand both research and international programs.

Sams was also previously dean of the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences at Clemson University from 2007 to 2009.

Sams holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree in poultry science and a doctorate in food science and human nutrition, all from the University of Florida, where he started his academic career as a graduate assistant. He joined the Texas A&M faculty in the Department of Poultry Science and Food Science in 1984, where he stayed until he was named dean at Clemson. He then returned to Texas A&M in 2009.

Sams also has experience in the private sector, having worked as a quality assurance analyst with Gold Kist Poultry in Florida.

Ed Feser, OSU provost and vice president, described Sams as a seasoned and savvy administrator with a strong vision for the college.

"There's the strong experience factor with Alan," Feser told the Capital Press. "Also, I think he's very comfortable and skilled working with the different constituencies you need to work with at an agricultural college."

Feser said a hiring committee of 15 people selected Sams from a 12-candidate field, which was whittled down to four finalists who each visited campus earlier this year.

Sams has a strong sense of the college's ability to serve agriculture in Oregon, as well as nationally and internationally, Feser said.

"He has a great interest in working with stakeholders," Feser said.

Dave Dillon, executive vice president of the Oregon Farm Bureau, said that bodes well for members who depend on the university for data, outreach and educating the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

"For us, OSU is our land grant institution," Dillon said. "It has the closest connection to family farms and ranches. The things that they do have an ongoing relevance to producers well beyond their college years."

## Europe foresees record apple crop

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

Europe is forecasting a record 12.6 million metric ton apple crop this fall, which means it will be increasingly competitive against Washington apples in the Middle East and Asia.

The forecast was released at the Prognosfruit Conference in Warsaw, Poland, Aug. 9, attended by about 300 international apple and pear growers, according to a news release from the World Apple and Pear Association.

The forecast is up 36 percent over last year's low crop of 9.25 million metric tons but is only 3 percent over the 2014 to 2016 average. It is slightly above the record 12.5 million metric ton 2014 crop. Europe's pear crop is predicted at 2.3 million metric tons, up 4 percent from 2017.

The increases are due to better climatic conditions across Europe with a mild winter, no late frost and limited impact of hail so far, the association said.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press  
Just a small portion of the thousands of apple bins staged at the McDougall & Sons Inc. Baker Flats facility north of East Wenatchee, Wash., waiting to be trucked to area orchards for harvest in the next few weeks.

Apples will be strong in Poland at 4.5 million metric tons and more average in Italy and France. Last season's stock is sold out so there will be strong demand in Europe on the fresh and processing side, the association said.

Drought and heat waves in several parts of Europe so far have had limited impact on the quality and fruit size. Markets are also complex given the continuing Russian embargo of Western produce and restrictions in the Mediterranean, the asso-

ciation said.

The 12.6 million fresh tons and processing metric ton forecast equates to 662 million, 42-pound boxes compared to a 131 million, 40-pound box Washington fresh forecast and a U.S. total fresh and processing likely to be about 280 million, 42-pound boxes, said Desmond O'Rourke, world apple market analyst and retired Washington State University agricultural economist, in Pullman, Wash.

Washington's fresh crop

equals 2.4 million metric tons and the U.S. fresh and processed is 5.3 million metric tons, he said.

"But you have to remember that the European population is well over 500 million people compared with our 320 million, so proportionally that makes U.S. and European crops more commensurate," he said.

"But they have a huge crop and a lot of markets are very difficult. Russia is still closed to all of Europe and us," O'Rourke said. "It hurts us in Asia and the Middle East, probably more in the Middle East. They can sell low-value product in there. They will be scrounging for markets so we'd better keep our promotions up."

Washington exporters are concerned about tariffs in Mexico, India and China, all top Washington export markets, he said.

That makes the Middle East more important and Washington has been falling there in recent years due to the Russian embargo and before it, he said.

## Former NIFA chief questions USDA decision to relocate institute

Ramaswamy says move will hinder ag research

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press



Sonny Ramaswamy

maswamy, director of NIFA from 2012 to 2018.

Moving the agency will take two to five years, he said, potentially impacting funding for research and deterring state researchers from taking on projects without NIFA funding.

The former director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture is questioning the USDA's decision to relocate it outside Washington, D.C.

NIFA provides funding for and pools together collaborative efforts on agricultural research, said Sonny Ra-

The USDA recently announced most NIFA and Economic Research Service employees will be relocated

outside the Washington, D.C., area by the end of 2019. New locations have yet to be determined.

According to the USDA, the move is being done:

- To improve USDA's ability to "attract and retain" highly qualified staff. The press

release cites "significant turnover" and difficulty recruiting employees to the Washington D.C., area due to the high cost of living and long commutes.

- To place the programs closer to stakeholders, "most of whom live and work far from the Washington, D.C., area."

- To benefit American taxpayers with "significant savings on employment costs and rent," allowing more employees to be retained even in the face of tightening budgets.

Ramaswamy worries moving NIFA will "destroy the most vaunted and envied re-

search and extension system in the world."

Also a former dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, Ramaswamy is now president of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities in Seattle.



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## Weekly fieldwork report

	Ore.	Wash.	Idaho	Calif.
<b>Item/description</b> (Source: USDA, NASS; NOAA)				
• Days suitable for fieldwork (As of Aug. 14)	7	6.8	6.9	7
• Topsoil moisture, surplus	0	0	0	0
• Topsoil moisture, percent short	90%	65%	72%	70%
• Subsoil moisture, surplus	0	0	0	0
• Subsoil moisture, percent short	88%	56%	67%	70%
• Precipitation probability (6-10 day outlook as of Aug. 14)	33-40% Below	40% Below	33-40% Below	Normal

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