

Apple crop estimate takes big drop

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — The 2018 Washington apple crop is now estimated to be significantly smaller than it was two months ago, which should bode well for sales and pricing in the months ahead.

The Oct. 1 estimate, released Oct. 5 by the Washington State Tree Fruit Association, is for 116.9 million, 40-pound boxes of fresh crop from this fall's harvest, down 10.8 percent from the 131-million-box forecast of Aug. 1.

"The industry uses historical information to help with the forecasts and 2012, 2014 and 2016 were all relatively large crops," said Sean Gilbert, co-owner of Gilbert Orchards in Yakima.

It stood to reason that the 2017 crop would be small like the 2013 and 2015 crops of 115 million boxes each. However, the 2017 crop stayed

large at 131.7 million and the smaller crop is coming this year.

The large crops had good fruit set from warm weather at bloom and pollination, but this year it was much cooler during bloom and pollination, Gilbert said.

Growers noticed a lighter set after bloom but didn't realize how much lighter until picking started in August, he said.

Harvest is virtually done for Gala, Golden Delicious and Honeycrisp with Red Delicious, Granny Smith, Fuji and Cripps Pink as the main varieties remaining, said Tom Riggan, general manager of Chelan Fresh Marketing in Chelan.

"We have better color overall than last year, sizes are larger and more conducive to retail and we have perfect fall weather so starch and sugars are ideal for long-term storage and good consistent quality," Riggan said.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Kanzi apples are picked at Mt. View Orchard, East Wenatchee, Wash., on Oct. 1. This year's crop has shrunk dramatically from the August estimate, which should help grower prices.

The smaller crop means pricing will soon improve for growers and there will be less pressure to move lots of fruit at the front end of the season, he said.

"It looks like a very manageable crop year," Riggan said. "Yes, hopefully better

pricing and returns than last year."

As of Oct. 5, the average asking price among Yakima and Wenatchee district shippers for extra fancy (standard grade), medium size 80 apples per box for new crop Gala was \$18 to \$24 compared with \$24

to \$28 a year ago, according to USDA. Break-even is generally \$17 to \$20.

Gala 88s were \$18 to \$22 compared with \$22 to \$26 a year ago. Granny Smith was \$20 to \$24 for 80s and 88s compared with \$40 to \$46 a year ago.

Red Delicious was \$17 to \$18 for 80s and 88s compared with \$14 to \$16 a year ago. Golden Delicious was \$22 to \$26 for 80s and 88s compared with \$30 to \$34 a year ago.

Honeycrisp was \$65 to \$70.90 for premium 80s and 88s compared with \$65 to \$75 a year ago.

Pricing is expected to improve as the last stocks of the 2017 crop sell out, said Jon DeVaney, president of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association.

But while the crop is now estimated nearly 11 percent smaller than last year, early movement is up 20 percent — 8.8 million boxes shipped as of Oct. 7 versus 7.3 million a

year ago, DeVaney said.

Shippers apparently pushed second-pick Gala and Honeycrisp that suffered from heat and was at higher risk of bitter pit decay and therefore suspect for long storage. Several of them talked about that at a Sept. 20 Washington Apple Commission meeting. Riggan said he thinks most of that is through the system and that higher quality first-pick was put into longer storage. The Oct. 1 estimates show all but Honeycrisp down in volume. Millions of boxes and percentage change from 2017: Gala, 29.9, -3 percent; Red Delicious, 24.5, -25 percent; Fuji, 15, -10.3 percent; Honeycrisp, 13.7 million boxes, +19.7 percent; Granny Smith, 13.7 million boxes, -23 percent; others, 6.6 million boxes, -4.1 percent; Golden Delicious, 5.9 million boxes, -13 percent; Cripps Pink, 4.8 million boxes, -6.6 percent; Ambrosia, 1.3 million boxes, -18.5 percent.

Settlement allows solar project to go forward

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Construction of a controversial 73-acre solar farm and apiary will proceed in Oregon's Clackamas County after farmland conservationists struck a settlement deal with the developer.

Earlier this year, the 1,000 Friends of Oregon nonprofit challenged the project's approval before the state's Land Use Board of Appeals after Clackamas County determined the development wouldn't preclude commercial agriculture because beehives would be kept on the property.

Normally, conditional use permits limit solar arrays on farmland to 12 acres, but in this case, a county hearings officer found the panels would displace fewer than 12 acres due to the honey-

bee forage growing beneath them.

Under the settlement, 1,000 Friends of Oregon has agreed to withdraw the objection as long as the developer, Pacific Northwest Solar LLC, agreed to conduct a study of the how the dual use works, said Damien Hall, the company's attorney. The solar company also agreed not to oppose temporary rules implemented by Oregon's Land Conservation and Development Commission, which clarify solar sites can't occupy more than 12 acres without an exception to the statewide goal of preserving farmland, said Meriel Darzen, attorney for 1,000 Friends of Oregon.

There's no data in Oregon about co-locating an apiary with solar panels, so the facility served as a good opportunity for a pilot project, she said. "We think it's an interesting concept."

Meanwhile, LCDC has convened an advisory committee to examine whether to make the temporary rules permanent and whether to otherwise update Oregon's land use regulations for solar facilities.

Solar facilities on Oregon farmland have increasingly been stirring controversy in recent years, with critics fearing that multiple 12-acre projects are being sited close together to sidestep regulations for larger projects.

"Cumulative impact is a big issue for the agricultural community," said Jim Johnson, land use specialist with the Oregon Department of Agriculture, during the committee's first meeting on Oct. 4 in McMinnville, Ore.

Radish seed litigation re-activated

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

An out-of-state bank is asking a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by Oregon farmers who seek compensation for the lost value of their radish seed.

Northwest Bank of Warren, Pa., had previously alleged the radish seed grown by the farmers served as collateral for a loan to a defunct seed broker.

However, that claim was rejected by a federal judge, who found the bank didn't have a security interest in the

seed, allowing the farmers to sell it.

While the litigation was ongoing, however, the farmers claim the crop lost value and they had to pay additional storage costs, prompting them to file a complaint seeking \$6.7 million in damages.

The lawsuit filed by the Radish Seed Growers Association was put on hold while Northwest Bank sought to convince the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that it actually did own the radish seed.

After the 9th Circuit rejected the bank's arguments, the

litigation was reactivated and now the parties have submitted new legal arguments to the court.

Despite its loss in the 9th Circuit, Northwest Bank argues it had reasonably believed that it owned a security interest in the seed, so its earlier lawsuit was not frivolous.

Unless the farmers can show there was no probable cause for the earlier lawsuit, the bank's claims are protected by the "absolute litigation privilege" that allows parties to make certain allegations in court, according to the bank.

Sugar beet harvest could set records

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

This year's beet harvest in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon could set record highs for sugar content and yield, thanks in part to good growing conditions and limited disease and insect pressure.

Lab measurement of samples as of early October pegged average sugar content at 17.4 percent, Amalgamated Sugar Co. Communications Specialist Jessica McAnally said. Last year's average was 16.84 percent.

Boise-based Amalgamated, a grower-owned cooperative, aims for 18 percent average sugar content company-wide, achieved just once previously, she said. The number represents the percentage of sugar in the beet, which contains mostly water.

Average sugar content was expected to move higher barring bad weather, McAnally said. Beets store more sugar in their roots as harvest progresses and air temperatures drop, though heavy rain can prompt the plants to devote more energy to growing and less to producing sugar.

Boise received 0.95 inch of rain Oct. 9, the National Weather Service reported. Some spots in the region received over an inch.

"I'm afraid it will hurt sugar content going forward," said Mitch Bicandi, a grower near Notus, in southwestern Idaho. "If we got another storm like this in the next week to 10 days, it would be really bad. We hope this is it."

Before the rain, southwest Idaho beets showed higher sugar content than in the past, he said. "We're just hoping they will hold."



Capital Press File

Sugar beet yields and sugar content are approaching record levels in this year's crop, growers say.

Bicandi, who plans to start harvesting Oct. 15, said growers whose harvest was underway Oct. 9 probably were shut down until late Oct. 10. But those who previously felt conditions were too dry to dig may have seen some benefit from the rain, which amounted to around a day's worth of irrigation, he said. Harvest typically wraps up by early November.

Beet growth and sugar production are helped by a long growing season with hot, dry days and cool nights. Disease risk increases when there is too much moisture in foliage.

"We have had an excellent growing season, and while we have seen some disease pressure, it has not been as bad as some years," McAnally said. "We also have increased quality available in seed varieties available to our growers."

On the pest and disease front, "overall we are pretty happy," said Oliver Neher, plant health manager with Amalgamated. The Treasure Valley of southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon had a bit more Cercospora Leaf Spot than the company would like, but it was a "very normal" year

for powdery mildew and Looper insects, without severe infestations, he said.

McAnally said the approximately 750 growers who comprise Amalgamated parent cooperative Snake River Sugar Co. will produce about 182,000 acres of sugar beets this year, about the same as 2017. Last year's yield averaged 39.2 tons per acre.

Board President Duane Grant, who co-owns 4-D Farms in Rupert, in south central Idaho, said yield per acre is expected to be up from a year ago by 1.5 to 2 tons per acre, or around 5 percent.

"We believe we are going to set a yield record and a sugar-content record this year," he said Oct. 9. "That is a credit to our growers, who have agreed to share with each other their cultural practices, reporting them into the company." Such sharing "lets us learn from each other how to improve our collective crop."

Nitrogen management is an example.

"Our growers have learned to very carefully analyze the fertility content of the top three or four feet of soil and apply just the right amount of fertilizer to grow the crop, but still allow it to consume available fertilizer and mature in a fertilizer-depleted environment," Grant said. Beets maturing amid excess fertilizer grow root mass but do not accumulate sugar, he said.

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 87
Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 10/15/2018. The sale will be held at 10:00am by
COPART OF WASHINGTON INC
2885 NATIONAL WAY WOODBURN, OR
2010 INTRNTL CARGOSTAR LT
VIN = 4RACS162XAN071813
Amount due on lien \$1,445.00
Reputed owner(s)
RICHARD C M C CAUL JR
BB7 FINAN FSB SHEFFIELD FINAN

Are you interested in:

- » A career in dairy production?
- » Managing a dairy farm?
- » Improving dairy systems?

The Chobani Scholars program is a \$20,000, multi-year scholarship from the University of Idaho's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences to support students with family connections to dairy farming.

Funded by the Chobani Foundation, this scholarship program provides vital financial support to fuel the next generation of Idaho dairy farmers.

Applications are due Dec. 1

www.uidaho.edu/cals/chobani

University of Idaho
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

OBC NORTHWEST, INC.

Nursery & Greenhouse Supplies

Shade Cloth

Nico-Shade Fabric

Features:

- Woven polypropylene fabric
- Reinforced selvages for stronger edges
- Resists mildew and abrasion
- Resistant to most acids, alkalis and solvents

- Shade range: 47%, 55%, 63%, 73%, 80%
- Stock Widths: 6', 10', 12'. Can be converted up to 50'

Greenhouses

OBC Northwest offers a full range of parts, supplies and technical support. Call for additional information.

- Semi-Gable, Semi-Quonset and Quonset
- CONLEY Gutter Connected Style
- Fertilizer Injectors
- Horizontal Airflow Fans

Call 800-477-4744 or visit obcnw.com
1076 SW Berg Parkway, Canby, Oregon 97013
Licensed & Bonded • License #127055 (OR) • OBCNO1 H022CR (WA)

PTO GENERATORS 7-100 KW

Pre-order your Baumalight generator now for delivery in 8 weeks and get an 8% discount.

8 WEEKS SAVES 8%

BAUMALIGHT.COM

MFG OF BRUSH MULCHERS | STUMP GRINDERS | DRAINAGE PLOWS | BOOM MOWERS | PTO GENERATORS | AUGER BITS & DRIVES | TRENCHERS | TREE SPADES | TREE SAWS | LIMB SHEARS AND MORE

ELLIS EQUIPMENT 800-949-2336

THE #1 CHOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL SPRAY EQUIPMENT

SPRAYER DEPOT
Spray Equipment, Parts & Accessories

NEW WEST COAST DISTRIBUTION FACILITY

- Now offering faster delivery to CA, OR, WA, ID.

FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS \$100+

ORDERS PLACED BY 2PM (PT) SHIP THE SAME DAY

(866) 750-7168 | SPRAYERDEPOT.COM
5% Discount: CAPITAL5 | Sales@SprayerDepot.com