

New barley named for longtime industry leader

Palmer aimed at craft brewing market

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

VALLEYFORD, Wash. — Mary Palmer Sullivan calls herself the “Barley Babe.”

She worked exclusively on barley at the Washington Barley Commission beginning in 1988. It merged in 2009 with the Washington Wheat Commission to become the Washington Grain Commission, where she is now vice president.

This year on her small farm, she grew Palmer, a new Washington State University barley variety named for her.

“I just wanted to name the last barley I’d release after her,” said Kevin Murphy, outgoing WSU barley breeder.

Murphy was the WSU



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press
Mary Palmer Sullivan, vice president of the Washington Grain Commission, stands in a field of Palmer, the new Washington State University barley variety named for her.

barley breeder for eight years. He is transitioning into a new position, as associate professor of international seed and cropping systems. Robert Brueggeman is

WSU’s new barley breeder.

“Mary has been a real champion of barley farming, breeding, beer, malt barley, food barley — all the specialty types of barley,” Murphy said. “She realizes the importance of barley in farming rotations and wants to see more barley out there.”

When Sullivan first started, Washington farmers grew more than 1 million acres of barley. Today, it’s down to roughly 105,000 acres, she said.

The problem, she said, was the price of barley, currently at \$140 per short ton, or 2,000 pounds.

“It’s difficult to promote something that people are not making any money on,” Sullivan said. “If it doesn’t pencil out, growers aren’t going to grow it.”

Sullivan is raising about 1.5 acres of Palmer on her

8.5-acre farm. Murphy said she’s helping provide enough to test its malting characteristics.

Murphy is targeting Palmer for the craft malt and brewing market, tailoring it to meet the craft brewing association’s needs. It yields well, he said. Acreage will likely begin on a small scale.

Craft beer’s market share is relatively small, roughly 12% of total production, but more than one-third of barley is destined for craft malt, Murphy said.

Many barley varieties are bred for larger operations. It’s “somewhat” unusual to breed a variety for the craft market, he said.

Palmer is currently being raised to increase breeder seed. Next spring, it will be raised for foundation seed.

It is slated to be available for growers in 2021, Murphy said.

U.S. meat producers get inside look at Japanese market

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

U.S. Meat Export Federation took a team of livestock producers to Japan to give them an overview of the market and show them how the organization is promoting U.S. meat.

“It’s been a jam-packed, fantastic week,” Cevin Jones, an Idaho cattle feeder and USMEF chairman-elect, said during a conference call from Tokyo on Thursday.

It’s great to see all the programs USMEF is doing in Japan and how checkoff dollars are being utilized to promote U.S. meat, he said.

The group had just come from a seminar where more than 300 existing and potential customers could sample U.S. meat products and learn about product availability and meat production trends.

The seminar allowed the team to meet with buyers, tell them what producers do in the U.S. and move the needle on U.S. meat exports, he said.

“It’s really been tremendous,” Dave Preisler, CEO of the Minnesota Pork Board, said.

Business is done person-to-person and business-to-business. Countries can set trade rules, but people make it happen, he said.

Over half the calories consumed in Japan are imported. Why not have that come from the Upper Midwest and bring dollars back to rural communities? he asked.

The key to growing U.S. meat exports is differentiating U.S. product from competitors’ product, Dan Halstrom, USMEF president and CEO, said.

There is a huge difference in the meat from grain-fed animals and grass-fed animals, he said.

Branding, telling a story,

is another focus for USMEF. Consumers want new brands and a new story, he said.

The tentative trade agreement between the U.S. and Japan is fueling a lot of enthusiasm in Japanese customers, he said.

U.S. beef is at a 12% tariff disadvantage in Japan, and pork is at a 7% disadvantage. Customers are enthusiastic about U.S. meat getting on a level playing field sooner rather than later, he said.

Japanese buyers are excited about the pending trade agreement, Dean Meyer, director of Iowa Corn Growers Association and USMEF executive committee member, said.

Livestock is the top consumer of corn, and corn growers have partnered with USMEF to export meat, he said.

The team was also able to visit with consumers and they are excited about eating corn-fed pork and beef, he said.

“It’s an exciting time here for red meat exports,” he said.

The tariff disadvantage is having an impact on beef exports to Japan — which have gone a little slack compared with last year, Jones said.

Japanese buyers are price sensitive. If the tariff differential gets corrected, it’ll put U.S. exports in good shape for next year, he said.

The outlook is positive on increased growth of U.S. meat exports. The U.S. is well positioned to supply increased protein demand, and not just in Japan, Halstrom said.

Japan is the largest value destination for U.S. beef and pork exports, representing 25% of both U.S. beef and pork exports on a value basis. The U.S. exported \$2.1 billion in beef and \$1.6 billion in pork to Japan in 2018.

Fruit Field Day showcases varieties

By BRAD CARLSON
Capital Press

Kylara Papenfuss and her Payson Fruit Growers colleagues often attend Fruit Field Day in Parma, Idaho, even though their company operates elsewhere.

“We have growers who meet here and get information,” said Papenfuss, whose company is in Utah.

The University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center, and its internationally recognized pomologist Essie Fallahi, have hosted Fruit Field Day for 23 years. Hundreds turn out to see Fallahi and other UI scientists showcase established and new varieties of wine and table grapes, tree fruits and nuts — a broad lineup for a growing region that’s colder than many others.

Water supply and irrigation, and population growth, are among major issues facing agriculture in the area, said Fallahi, who started the UI pomology program 30 years ago.

About 80 crops are grown around Parma, which is near the Oregon border. The region has extensive irrigation



Brad Carlson/Capital Press
University of Idaho pomology program leader Essie Fallahi at UI’s annual Fruit Field Day in Parma Sept. 6.

infrastructure. Fallahi said he and colleagues have spent some 25 years working on irrigation advances that target the fruit industry.

Frequent attendee Jim Zamzow, of Nampa-based lawn-and-garden retail chain Zamzows, said he has focused on soil improvement in recent years. He follows production-agriculture research and best practices, which he said growers of various sizes can use to improve soil.

“And I come for service, to contribute,” he said. “I see lots of people I know.”

The Sept. 6 field day showcased new cultivars of table grapes, peaches, nectarines, apples, plums, quince, Asian pears and other alternative fruits as well as cutting-edge practices for orchards.

UI has said Parma-based research on almonds and walnuts shows these crops have production-scale commercial potential for the state.

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Workers dispose of farm chemicals as part of an Idaho State Department of Agriculture pesticide disposal program.

ISDA to collect pesticides

By CAROL RYAN DUMAS
Capital Press

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has scheduled free pesticide disposals in several locations during September.

Agricultural producers, dealers, professional applicators and homeowners can dispose of unusable herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides or other products with a “cide” in the name.

No fertilizer, micronutrients, paint, solvents or motor oil can be accepted at the collections.

Unusable pesticides can be taken to the collection sites between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Collections will be held at the following locations.

Sept. 24: Burley, BLM field office, 3630 Overland Road.

Sept. 25: Twin Falls, Twin Falls Canal Co., 357 Sixth Ave. West.

Sept. 25: Nampa, Pickles Butte Landfill, 15500 Missouri Ave.

ISDA asks that participants register the total number of pounds of pesticides requested for disposal by calling a local ISDA field office or the Boise office at (208) 332-8605.

For more information, visit <https://agri.idaho.gov/main/56-2/pesticides/pesticide-disposal/>